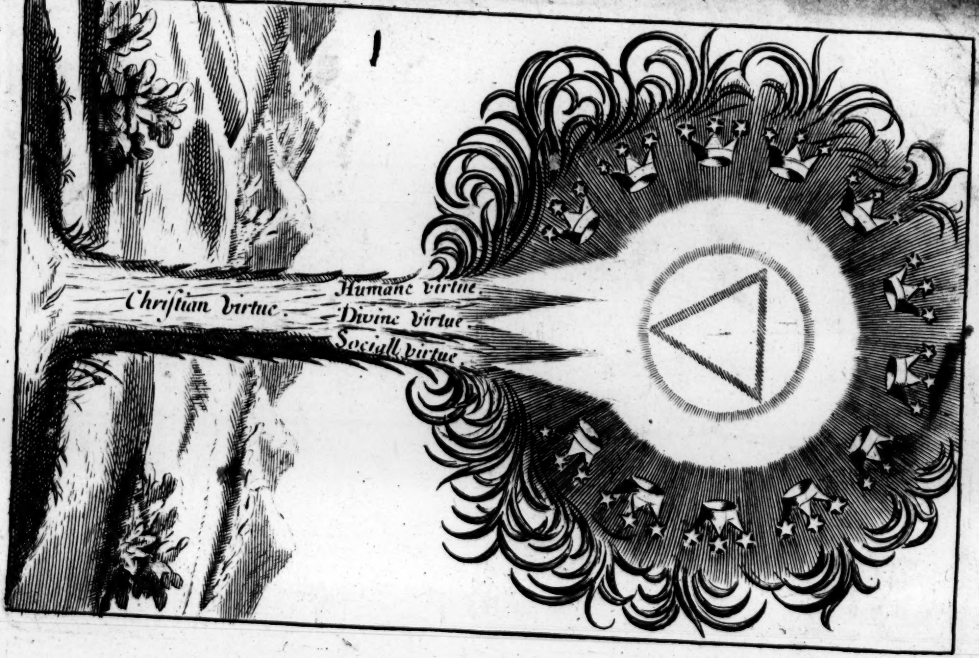
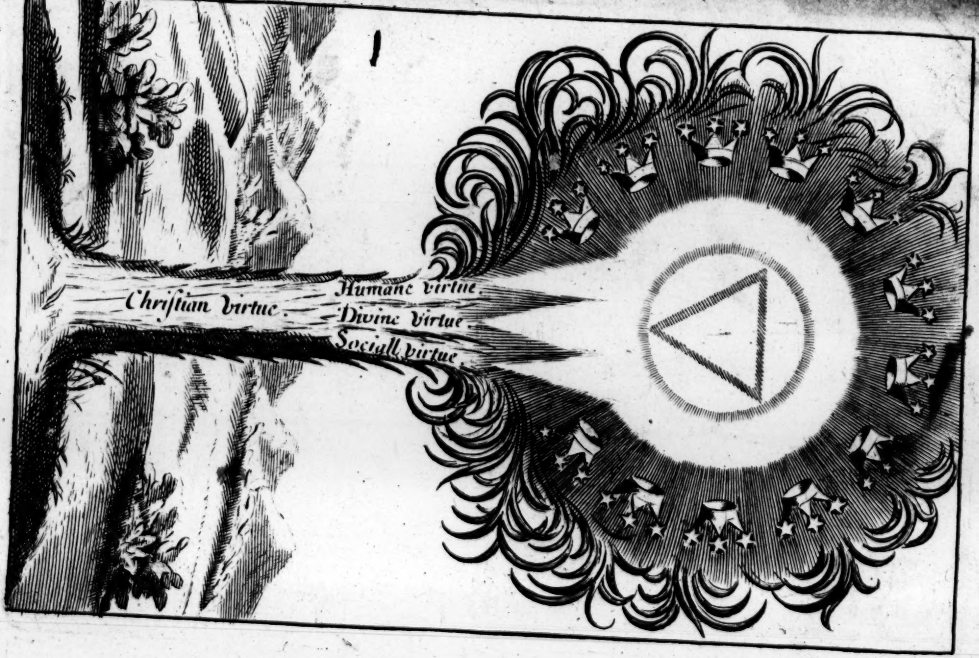

Christian virtue
Humane virtue
Divine virtue
Sociall virtue


Christian virtue
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THE Christian Life.

PART I.

From its
BEGINNING,
To its
CONSUMMATION
In GLORY.

Together with
The several Means and Instruments of Christianity conducing thereunto;
WITH
Directions for Private Devotion,
AND
FORMS of PRAYER,
Fitted to the several States of Christians.

By JOHN SCOTT, D. D.
Rector of S. Giles in the Fields.

The Seventh Edition, Corrected.

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Junii 15. 1686.

C. Alſton R. P. D. *Hen.* Epiſc. *Lond.* à Sacris.

TO THE

Right Honourable

AND

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

HENRY

Lord Biſhop of LONDON,

And one of His Majeſty's moſt Honourable Privy-Council, *&c.*

My LORD,

THAT I preſume to lay theſe Papers at your Lordſhip's feet, is not becauſe I imagine they *deſerve*, but becauſe I am conſcious they *need* ſo great a Patronage. Not but that, were the Diſcourſes they contain as great and meritorious as their Argument, they might ſafely ſhelter themſelves under their own Deſerts, and challenge *Homage*, inſtead of begging *Protection*: But though I have done my beſt Endeavour to treat this great Theme ſuitably

to its own native Majeſty, yet I am very ſenſible it hath not eſcaped the too common Fate of all ſuch ſublime and excellent Subjects, which is to be foul'd and ſully'd by courſe handling. But my lot falling in this unhappy Age, wherein the beſt *Church* and *Religion* in the World are in ſuch apparent Danger of being Crucified, like their bleſſed Author, between thoſe two Thieves (and both, alas, impenitent ones) *Superſtition* and *Enthuſiaſm*, I thought my ſelf obliged not to ſit ſtill as an unconcern'd Spectator of the *Tragedy*, but in my little Sphere, and according to my poor Ability, to endeavour its Prevention: And conſidering that the moſt effectual Means the *Romaniſts* have uſed to ſubvert *this* Church, which they ſo much *envy*, and all the Reformations do ſo much *admire* and *depend* on, hath been to *divide* her own Children from her, and *arm* them againſt her, by ſtarting new Opinions among them, and engaging their Zeal (which was wont to be employ'd to better Purpoſes) in hot Diſputes about the *Modes* and *Circumſtances* of her Worſhip: I thought a Diſcourſe of the *Chriſtian Life*, which is the proper Sphere of Chriſtian *Zeal*, might be a good Expedient to take Men off from thoſe dangerous *Contentions* which were *kindled* and are *fed* and *blown* by ſuch as deſign our common Ruine.

Ruine. For ſure, did our People throughly underſtand what 'tis to be Chriſtians *indeed*, and how much Duty that implies, they could never find ſo much Leiſure as they do to quarrel and wrangle about *Trifles*.

This, my Lord, is the ſincere Deſign of what I here preſent to your Lordſhip; and however it may *ſucceed*, I have this Satisfaction, that I *meant well*, and have expreſs'd my Good-Will to this poor *envied* Church, whoſe truly primitive Conſtitution, pure and undefiled Religion, I ſhall always admire and reverence; and whatſoever her Fate may be, I am chain'd to her Fortunes by my *Reaſon* and *Conſcience*, and ſhall ever eſteem it more eligible to be cruſht by her Fall, which God avert, than to flouriſh and triumph on her Ruines.

But among the *many* ill Omens that threaten our Church, there is *one* which ſeems to preſage its Proſperity; and that is that ſuch Eminent Stations in it, as your Lordſhip's, are ſo excellently ſupplied. For although whether the Part you are deſigned for, be to grace her *Triumphs* or her *Funeral*, is known only to the Sovereign Diſpoſer of Events; yet this, *my Lord*, all that wiſh well to our Church conclude, that God beſtow'd *You* upon her as a Token of Love. For which they have ſufficient Warrant even

from the daily Experience they have of the Prudence and Vigilance of your Government, the Piety, Integrity, and Generosity of your Temper, of your invincible Loyalty to your Prince, your undaunted Zeal for the Reformed Religion, and your grave and obliging Deportment towards all you converse with. I shall trouble your Lordship no farther, but conclude this Address with that which I am sure is the hearty Prayer of all your honest Clergy, that the God of Heaven would long continue your Lordship a blessing to the Church, and to this Diocese, an Honour to your Sacred Order, and the Noble Stock you descend from; and if what I here present, prove but so prosperous as to do some good in the World, and obtain your Lordship's Acceptance, it will be a noble Compensation of this well-meant Endeavour. I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Humble

and most Obedient Servant,

JOHN SCOTT.

THE PREFACE.

I *Shall not trouble the Reader with a long Apology for the Publication of the enſuing Treatiſe, though I might plead (as other Authors do) the Importunity of Friends, whoſe Judgments I very much reverence. For to ſay the Truth, I do by no means think that in an Affair of this Nature it is* ſafe *or fit for a Man to be over-born by the Perſuaſions of thoſe, whoſe* Judgments *he hath juſt cauſe to ſuſpect may be brib'd by their Friendſhips. And therefore had I not hoped that in ſuch an Age as this, (wherein, through our own* Diviſions *and* Debaucheries, *both in* Opinion *and* Practice, *and the Helliſh Contrivances of our* Enemies, *we have ſuch a diſmal Proſpect of things before us) theſe Papers might be of ſome* Uſe *to Religion and the Souls of Men, I would never have troubled the World with them; but hoping they might, I have ventured upon that reaſon to publiſh them.*

I have for ſome years been a ſorrowful Spectator of the black Cloud that is gathering over my Native Country, and I muſt confeſs have not been without my ſhare of the Fears *and* Anxieties

xieties *of the Age*; *but being at laſt quite ſick of looking* downwards *upon this uncomfortable Scene of Things, I had no other way to relieve my oppreſſed Thoughts, but to raiſe them above this miſerable World, and entertain them with the* Comforts *of Religion, and the* Hopes *of a better State beyond the Grave; wherein, I thank God, I have found ſuch* Reſt *and* Satisfaction *of Mind, as render'd my blackeſt Apprehenſions of the enſuing Storm very* tolerable. *And now becauſe I would not eat my Morſel* alone, *and enjoy my Satisfaction to* my ſelf, *I have endeavoured, by this following Treatiſe of Heaven, and the Way thither, to* break *and* diſtribute *it among my diſtreſſed Neighbours; that ſo by carrying their Minds from theſe* diſmal *Expectations into the* quiet *and* happy *Regions above, and directing their Lives and Actions* thither, *I might communicate to them the bleſſed Art how to live* happily *in a diſtracted World. And methinks, when our* preſent *State is ſo perplex'd and uncertain, we ſhould be more than ordinarily concern'd to make ſure of ſomething, and to provide for a future Well-being, that ſo we may not be miſerable in both Worlds. As for the* Argument *I have undertaken, I may, without breach of Modeſty, ſay, it is a great and a* noble *one; it is the* Chriſtian Life, *which, next to the* Angelical, *approaches neareſt to the Life of God. But as for the* Management

of

of it, all that I can ſay, is this, I have employ'd my beſt *Thoughts and Skill about it; and if, after this, I have any where* wrong'd *or* miſrepreſented *it, it is more my* Unhappineſs *than my* Fault. *Perhaps it may be thought that in the* firſt three Chapters *I have diſcours'd more* ſpeculatively *than 'tis fit in a Book that is deſign'd for* common *Uſe and Edification; but it may be, when the Reader hath conſidered the* Nature *of the Arguments I have there handled, and how neceſſarily they fall in with my* Deſign, *he will be convinc'd that 'twas* unavoidable. *And yet I doubt not, but with a little Diligence and Attention of Mind, the* plaineſt *Reader may be able to comprehend the main Reaſon and* Evidence *of what I drive at.*

In the firſt place, I thought 'twould be neceſſary, in treating of the Chriſtian Life, *to give ſome Account of the bleſſed* End *it refers to, that ſo from the Nature of that, we might be the better able to judge of the* Neceſſity *and* Uſefulneſs *of thoſe* Means *which Chriſtianity preſcribes in order to it. And this I have endeavoured in the* firſt Chapter; *where I have only ſo far explain'd the Nature of the Heavenly State and Felicities, as was neceſſary to light and conduct us through the enſuing Deſign.*

In the ſecond place, I judg'd it would be no leſs expedient to give ſome general *Account of what* kinds *of Means are neceſſary to our obtaining*

taining this End ; *that ſo we might be convinced how requiſite both the* principal *and* inſtrumental *Parts of the* Chriſtian Life *are to our Everlaſting Happineſs. And this I have attempted in the* ſecond Chapter : *wherein, from the Conſideration of the vaſt Diſtance there is between the* pure *and* bleſſed *State of Heaven, and this* corrupt *and degenerate State of Humane Nature, I have endeavour'd to ſhew that 'tis not only neceſſary for us to* practiſe *and* acquire *thoſe Chriſtian Vertues, in the Perfection whereof the heavenly Bliſs conſiſts ; but that to enable us to practiſe, acquire and improve them, there are ſundry* other *inſtrumental Duties indiſpenſibly neceſſary ; which Duties, as I have there proved, are of no other* Uſe *or* Significancy *in Religion, than as they are* Means *of Vertue and Piety.*

And having thus diſtributed the Means into their proper Kinds and Order, I have in the third Chapter *treated largely of the* firſt *Kind, to wit, the Practice of the* Chriſtian Vertues ; *in which, I confeſs, I have neither handled the particular Vertues in their full* Extent *and* Latitude, *nor info c'd them with all their* moral Reaſons ; *that being done already to excellent purpoſe in thoſe two incomparable Treatiſes of* Holy Living and Dying, *and of* The Whole Duty of Man. *Nor could I have done it without ſwelling this Diſcourſe, which is large*

large enough already, into a Volume too large for common Use. And indeed, all that was neceſſary to my *Purpoſe, was only ſo far to explain the Nature of each particular Vertue, as that the Reader might thereby underſtand what is meant by them: But that which moſt concern'd me in purſuance of my* main *Deſign, was to prove, that the Practice of every Vertue is an* eſſential *Part of the* Chriſtian Life, *and a* neceſſary *Means to the bleſſed End of it. And accordingly, as I have ſhewn from the expreſs Commands of our Religion, our* indiſpenſable *Obligation to practiſe every Vertue; ſo I have endeavoured to ſhew how in the Practice of it we do naturally* grow up *to the Heavenly State: as, on the contrary, how in the courſe of a ſinful Life we do by a neceſſary Efficiency gradually* ſink *our ſelves into the State of the Damned. For I have proved at large, that there is ſomething of* Heaven *and* Hell *in the very Nature of each particular* Vertue *and* Vice, *and that in the Perfection of theſe two oppoſite* Qualities *conſiſts the main* Happineſs *and* Miſery *of thoſe two oppoſite* States. *From whence it will neceſſarily follow, that as in the Practice of the one or t'other we grow more* Vertuous *or* Vicious; *ſo proportionably we riſe up towards* Heaven, *or ſink down towards* Hell *by a fatal Tendency of Nature. The Truth of which is not only acknowledged by the generality of* Chriſtian Writers,

but

but also by the best and wisest of the Heathen Philosophers; *though this, I think, is the* first *Attempt that hath been made to derive the Heavenly and the Hellish States from the nature of the particular Vertues and Vices. I pray God that what I have said may but engage some more* skilful *Pen in the Prosecution of this* noble *Argument. For I know nothing in the World that can be more effectual to engage Men to be* substantially *Religious, to take them off from* Hypocrisie *and* Formality, *from all* presumptuous *Hopes, and* false *Dependencies, than their being throughly convinc'd of this Truth, that the Eternal* Happiness *or* Misery *of Souls is founded in their* Vertue *or* Vice, *and that there is as* inseparable *a Connexion between* Grace *and* Glory, Sin *and* Hell, *as there is between* Fire *and* Heat, Frost *and* Cold, *or any other necessary* Cause *and its* Effect. *For if they were but throughly persuaded of* this, *they would easily discern what wretched* Nonsence *it is, to think of going to Heaven or escaping Hell, whilst they continue in any wilful Course of* Disobedience *to the* Laws *of* Vertue.

Having thus treated at large of the first *Sort of Means by which the End of our* Christian Life *is to be obtained, I proceed in the* fourth Chapter, *which is the largest of all, to give an Account of the* second, viz. *the* Instrumental

ſtrumental Duties *of Chriſtianity, which are injoin'd us as Means ſubſervient to our Practice, Acquiſition and Improvement of thoſe* Heavenly Vertues, *in the Perfection whereof our Chief Happineſs conſiſts. And for the more diſtinct handling of theſe, I have conſidered Men under a* Threefold *State with reſpect to the* Chriſtian Life; *Firſt, as* entering *into it; Secondly, as* actually engaged *in it; Thirdly, as* perfecting *and* improving *themſelves by* Perſeverance *in it; to each of which I have* appropriated *ſuch of the* inſtrumental Duties *as I conceive did more* eſpecially *belong to them. 'Tis true, ſome of the Duties here treated of, are not* purely *inſtrumental, but of a* mix'd *Nature, ſuch as* Faith, Prayer, actual Dedication of our good works to God, *&c. which are* eſſential *Parts of Divine Worſhip, and, as ſuch, do belong to thoſe* Divine Vertues *the Perfection whereof makes a Principal Part of the everlaſting Happineſs of Souls. But* here *I have conſidered them only as* Means *and* Inſtruments *in the Uſe of which we are to acquire and perfect thoſe* Beatifical *Vertues. And of this ſort of Means I do not remember any* one *Particular recommended in holy Scripture, but what hath been here treated of. Upon* ſome, *indeed, I have inſiſted much more* briefly *than upon* others, *becauſe I find them already* largely *accounted for in other Practical Books, and*

eſpecially

especially in those two excellent Treatises abovenamed; but of those which they *either cursorily touch, or take no notice of at all, I thought my self obliged to give a* larger *Account.*

From the whole, I would recommend to the pious Reader the Consideration of the admirable Structure *and* Contrivance *of the* Practical Part *of Christianity, which having proposed to us an* End *so great and sublime, and so highly worthy of our most vigorous Prosecutions, hath also furnish'd us with such choice and effectual* Means *of all sorts to attain it. The Consideration of which would be in it self a great Inducement to me to believe* Christianity *a* Divine Religion, *though I were utterly unacquainted with its* External *Evidence and Motives of Credibility. For it can never enter into my Head, that such a* rare *and* exquisite *Contrivance to make Men* good *and* happy, *could ever owe its Original to the meer Invention of a* Carpenter's Son, *and a company of illiterate* Fishermen. *Especially considering how far it excels the Moral Precepts even of those* Divine Philosophers *who believed a future State of a blessed Immortality, and exercised their best Wit in prescribing* Rules *to guide and direct Men thither.*

And having given this large Account of the instrumental Duties *of the* Christian Life, *and also inforced the several Divisions of them with*

with proper Arguments *and* Motives, *I thought fit to add a* fifth Chapter, *wherein I have given ſome* Rules *for the more profitable* reading *of this Practical Diſcourſe, and alſo ſome general* Directions *for the Exerciſe of our* private Religion *in all the different States of the* Chriſtian Life, *together with certain* Forms *of* private Devotion *fitted for each State. In which I have ſuppoſed, what I doubt is a very deplorable Truth,* viz. *That the generality of Chriſtians, after their* Initiation *by* Baptiſm *into the Publick Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, are ſo unhappy as to be ſeduced either through bad* Example *or* Education *into a* vitious *State of Life; and that conſequently from* thence *they muſt take their firſt ſtart into the through Practice of Chriſtianity. Not that I make the leaſt doubt, but that there are a great many excellent Chriſtians, who, by the bleſſing of God upon their pious Education, have been ſecured from this Calamity, and trained up from their Infancy under a prevailing Senſe of God and Religion; and therefore for ſuch as theſe, as there is no need of that ſolemn Method of* Repentance *preſcribed in the* firſt Section *of the* fourth Chapter, *ſo neither is there of thoſe firſt* Penitential Prayers *in this* fifth Chapter, *which is accommodated to that State. For theſe Perſons have long ſince been* actually engaged *in the* Chriſtian Life, *and, as 'tis to be ſuppoſed have*

made conſiderable Improvements *in it, and therefore as they are only concern'd in the Duties of the* Second *and* Third *States of the* Chriſtian Life, *ſo they are only to uſe the Prayers which are fitted to* thoſe *States, which with ſome variation of thoſe Phraſes which ſuppoſe the paſt Courſe of our Life to have been* vicious, *they may eaſily accommodate to their own Condition. But the Deſign of this Diſcourſe is not only to conduct them* onwards *in their Way, who have already* entered *upon the* Chriſtian Life, *but alſo to reduce thoſe to it, who have been ſo unhappy as to* wander *into vicious Courſes ; or rather, though it ſerves* both *Purpoſes, 'tis wholly deſigned for the ſame Perſons,* viz. *to* ſeek *and* bring back *thoſe loſt Sheep who have* ſtray'd *from the Paths of Chriſtian Piety and Vertue, and then to* lead *them on through all the intermediate Stages to the happy State of immortal Pleaſures at the end of them. And now if what hath been ſaid, ſhould, by the Bleſſing of God, obtain its deſigned Effect upon any Perſon, I ask no other Requital for all the Pains it hath coſt me, but his earneſt Prayers to God for me, that after my beſt Endeavours to guide and direct* him *to Heaven, I may not fall ſhort of it* my ſelf.

THE

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ſtian Life ; *firſt*, *as* entering *into it* ; *ſecondly*, *as* actually engaged *in it* ; *thirdly*, *as* Growing on *to Perfection*, *by* Perſeverance *in it* ; *to one of which three States theſe Inſtrumental Duties of Chriſtianity belong*, p. 192, 193, *&c.*

SECT. I.

Containing thoſe Inſtrumental Duties which are neceſſary for us, *in our* Entrance *in the Chriſtian Life* ; *which are*, *firſt*, Faith, p. 193, 194, *&c.* *ſecondly*, Conſideration, p. 197, 198, *&c.* *thirdly*, *a* deep *and* through *Conviction of our need of a* Mediator, p. 201, 202, *&c.* *fourthly*, *a deep* Sorrow, Shame, *and* Remorſe *for our paſt Iniquities*, p. 208, 209, *&c.* *fifthly*, *earneſt* Prayer *for Divine Aſſiſtance*, p. 211, 212, *&c.* *ſixthly*, *a ſerious and ſolemn* Reſolution *of Amendment*, p. 213, 214, *&c.*

SECT. II.

Containing certain Motives *to engage Men to the Practice of theſe Duties* ; *firſt*, *the vaſt* Neceſſity *of our entering into the Chriſtian Life* one time or other, p. 218, 219, *&c.* *ſecondly*, *the great* Security *and* Advantage *of our entering upon it* now, p. 221, 222, *&c.* *thirdly*, *the neceſſary Dependence of the* final Succeſs *upon the* Well-beginning *of it*, p. 224, 225, *&c.* *fourthly*, *that when once*

'tis well begun, *the main Difficulty of it is over*, p. 226, 227, *&c.*

SECT. III.

Containing those Instrumental Duties which are necessary for us when we are actually engaged *in the Christian Life*, p. 231, *&c. In general, it is necessary that we should frequently* repeat *the Duties of our* Entrance, p. 232, 233, *&c. but more* particularly, *first, that we should arm our selves with* Patience *and* Courage, p. 236, 237, *&c. secondly, that we should propose to our selves the best* Examples, p. 239, 240, *&c. thirdly, that we should frequently apply our selves for Advice and Direction to our* Spiritual Guides, p. 245, 246, *&c. fourthly, that as often as we can, we should actually* intend *and* aim at God *in the Course of our Lives and Actions*, p. 251, 252, *&c. fifthly, that we should possess our Minds with an awful Apprehension of God's* Presence, *with an* Inspection *over us*, p. 258, 259, *&c. sixthly, that we should frequently* examine *and* review *our own Actions*, p. 266, 267, *&c. seventhly, that we should be very* watchful *and* circumspect, p. 270, 271, *&c. eighthly, that we should be diligent and industrious in our* particular Callings, p. 274, 275, *&c. ninthly, that we should endeavour to keep up a constant* Chearfulness *of*

of Spirit *in Religion*, p. 283, 284, *&c. tenthly, that we ſhould maintain in our Minds a conſtant* Senſe *and* Expectation *of* Heaven, p. 289, 290, *&c. eleventhly, that we ſhould live in the frequent Uſe of the Publick* Ordinances *and* Inſtitutions *of our Religion*, p. 293, 294, *&c.*

SECT. IV.

Containing certain Motives *to animate Men againſt the* Difficulties *of theſe Duties; Firſt, that whatſoever Difficulty there is in them, we may* thank our ſelves *for it*, p. 301, 302, *&c. Secondly, that in the courſe of our* Sin *there is a great deal of Difficulty, as well as in theſe Duties*, p. 303, 304, *&c. Thirdly, that how great ſoever the Difficulty be, it muſt be undergone, or that which is much* more intolerable, p. 305, 306, *&c. Fourthly, that how difficult ſoever they may be, the Grace of God will render them* poſſible *to us, if we be not wanting to our ſelves*, p. 307, 308, *&c. Fifthly, that though they are difficult, yet they are fairly conſiſtent with all our other* neceſſary Occaſions, p. 310, 311, *&c. Sixthly, that the Difficulty is ſuch as will* abate *and* wear off *by degrees*, p. 313, 314, *&c. Seventhly, that there is a World of preſent* Peace *and* Satisfaction *intermingled with the Difficulties*, p. 315, 316, *&c. Eighthly, that the Difficulty is abundantly*

dantly compensated by the Reward *of them*, p. 318, 319, *&c.*

SECT. V.

Containing those Instrumental Duties which are necessary for us, in order to our improving towards Perfection, *by* Perseverance *in the Christian Life; which are, First, that while we stand, we should not be* over-confident *of our selves, but keep a Jealous Eye upon the Weakness and Inconstancy of our own Natures*, p. 323, 324, *&c. Secondly, that if at any time we* wilfully *fall, we should* immediately *arise again by Repentance*, p. 326, 327, *&c. Thirdly, that for the future we should endeavour to withdraw our Affections from the* Temptations *of the World, and especially from those which were the Occasion of our Fall*, p. 328, 329, *&c. Fourthly, that we should curiously search into the smaller* Defects *and* Indecencies *of our Nature, in order to our timely correcting and reforming them*, p. 333, 334, *&c. Fifthly, that we should, as far as lawfully we can, live in the* Communion *of the* Church, *whereof we are Members*, p. 336, 337, *&c. Sixthly, that we should not stint our Progress in Religion, (out of a fond Opinion that we are good* enough *already) to any* determinate Degrees *or* Measures of *Goodness*, p. 354, 355, *&c. Seventhly, that we should frequently entertain our selves with the* Prospect

ſpect *of our* Mortality, p. 358, 359, *&c. Eighthly, that to put our ſelves into a good poſture of* Dying, *we ſhould diſcharge our Conſciences of all the* Reliques *and* Remains *of our paſt* Guilts, p. 361, 362, *&c. Ninthly, that to* compenſate, *ſo far as we are able, for thoſe Guilts, we ſhould take care to* Redeem *the Time we have formerly miſ-ſpent in ſinful Courſes, by being* doubly diligent *in the Exerciſe of all the contrary Vertues*, p. 365, 366, *&c. Tenthly, that we ſhould labour after a rational and well-grounded* Aſſurance, p. 369, 370, *&c.*

SECT. VI.

Containing certain Motives *to perſuade men to the Practice of theſe Duties of* Perſeverance, *which are all deduced from the Conſideration of the* urgent *Neceſſity of our* final Perſeverance; *As firſt, unleſs we immediately recover when we have* wilfully relapſed, *we ſhall go much faſter* back *than ever we went* forward, p. 377, 378, *&c. Secondly, if after we have made ſome Progreſs in Religion we* totally Relapſe, *we ſhall thereby* forfeit *the* Fruit *of all our* paſt Labour, p. 379, 380, *&c. Thirdly, we ſhall* forfeit *the* Fruit *of it after we have undergone the* greateſt *Difficulty of it*, p. 382, 383, *&c. Fourthly, we ſhall not only forfeit the Fruit of our* paſt *Labour, but render our* Recovery *more* hazardous,

dous, p. 384, 385, *&c. Fifthly, we ſhall not only render our Recovery more difficult for the* future, *but plunge our ſelves for the* preſent *into a far more* criminal *and* guilty *Condition*, p. 388, 389, *&c. Sixthly, we ſhall not only render our ſelves more guilty for the preſent, but expoſe our ſelves, if we die in our ſin, to a* deeper *and more* dreadful Ruine, p. 393, 394, *&c.*

CHAP. V.

Containing ſome ſhort Directions *for the more profitable* reading *the preceding Diſcourſe*, p. 396, 397, *&c. and alſo Directions for the good conduct and regular exerciſe of our* Cloſet-Religion *in all the different ſtates of the Chriſtian Life, together with* Forms of private Devotion *fitted to each ſtate*, p. 399. *the firſt are for the ſtate of* Entrance *into the Chriſtian Life*, p. 400, 401, *&c. the ſecond for the ſtate of* actual Engagement *in it*, p. 409. *the third for the ſtate of* Growth *and* Improvement *towards Perfection*, p. 421.

OF THE Christian Life.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the ultimate End of the Christian Life.

IN order to our understanding what is the Nature, Use, and Excellency of any *Means*, it is necessary we should have a true and genuine Notion of those peculiar *Ends* which they drive at. For the Nature of them, as they are *Means*, consists in being serviceable to some *End*; but to what they are particularly serviceable, must be collected from the Nature of those particular *Ends* whereunto they are directed. And therefore till we know what those particular *Ends* are, it is impossible we should know whether they are *Means* or no, or, which is the same thing, whether they are serviceable to any *End* or *Purpose*.

It being therefore the Design of this *Work* to explain the Nature of the *Christian Life*, it will be necessary (for the clearing of our way) to give some Account of the blessed *End* for which it

it is intended; which will very much contribute to our right underſtanding of the great uſefulneſs and ſubſerviency of each part of it thereunto. Therefore,

I. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew what is the peculiar *End* of the *Chriſtian Life.*

II. Wherein the true Nature of this *End* conſiſts.

I. As for the *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*, we are aſſured from Scripture, That it is no other but *Heaven* it ſelf, that ſtate of endleſs *Bliſs* and *Happineſs* which God hath prepared in the World above, for the reception of all thoſe, *who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory and honour and immortality.* That this is the *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*, is evident from hence, becauſe 'tis every where propoſed by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, as the Chief Good of a Chriſtian, and the Supreme Motive to all Chriſtian Vertue. For ſo S. *John*, that boſome-Favourite of our Saviour, aſſures us, that *This is the Promiſe which Chriſt hath promiſed us, even Eternal Life*, 1 *John* ii. 25. And if we look into the Goſpel of S. *John*, who hath more largely recorded our Saviour's Sermons and Diſcourſes than any other Evangeliſt, we ſhall find *Eternal Life* ſtill propoſed by him as the ſupereminent Promiſe to encourage and perſuade men to the profeſſion and practice of *Chriſtianity.* For ſo, *John* iv. 36. 'tis propoſed by our Saviour as that which is the Harveſt of a Chriſtian, to which, like the Husbandman's plowing and ſowing, all our care and endeavour is to be directed; *He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life.* Conſonantly whereunto S. *Paul* tells us,

us, that *he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting*, Gal. vi. 8. And this, as our Saviour tells us, is the great Reward which he gives to all thoſe that hear and follow him, *John* x. 27, 28. and this is the great Argument which he every where inſiſts on, That he that believeth hath *Life Everlaſting*, that whoſoever heareth His Word hath *Life Everlaſting*, and that His Commandment is *Life Everlaſting*. And *Rom.* vi. 22. *Everlaſting Life* is expreſly ſaid to be the End of *having our fruit unto Holineſs*; and as ſuch we are bid to direct our Actions unto it, *to believe in Chriſt unto Everlaſting Life*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. to do good, to this end, that we *may lay hold upon Eternal Life*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 18, 19. *to look unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs*, &c. *Heb.* xii. 2. And therefore *Heaven* is deſcribed to be the Chriſtian *Canaan*, to which we are to direct all our ſteps, whilſt we are travelling through this World, *Heb.* xi. 14, 15, 16. And the whole Life of a Chriſtian is expreſſed by *ſeeking* it: *Mat.* vi. 33. *Heb.* xiii. 14. *Col.* iii. 1. And the *incorruptible* Crown is affirmed to be as much the End of the Race of the *Chriſtian Life*, as thoſe *corruptible* Crowns were of the races in the *Olympick Games*. 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. For it is to *Eternal Glory* that we are *called*, 1 *Pet.* v. 10. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 14. and in the diſcharge of all that Duty whereunto we are *called*, we are to *look* to this *bleſſed Hope* as our great *End* and *Encouragement*, *Tit.* ii. 13.

This I have the more largely inſiſted upon, becauſe of a great miſtake that many Perſons have lain

lain under in this matter; which is, that the *Glory of God* is the only ultimate *End* of a Chriſtian, and that this is a diſtinct *End* from *Heaven*; The firſt of which, I confeſs, is very true, but the laſt abſolutely *falſe*. That the *Glory of God* is the laſt End of a Chriſtian, is evident from thoſe Texts which bid us *do all to the Glory of God*, 1 *Cor.* x. 31. and which make the *Glory of God* to be the point in which all the *Fruits of Righteouſneſs* do concenter, *Phil.* i. 11. which propoſe this as the *End* of all Religious Performances, *That God in all things may be glorified*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 11. and affirm, that 'tis to this purpoſe that we are choſen to be Chriſtians, that we ſhould be to the *Praiſe of his Glory*, *Eph.* i. 12. But that the *Glory of God* is no diſtinct *End* from our being made Partakers of the *Happineſs* of *Heaven*, is as evident from hence, that this *Glory* conſiſts not in any thing that we can add or contribute to Him, whoſe eſſential Glory is ſo immenſe and ſecure, that there is nothing we can do, can either Encreaſe or Diminiſh it; and there is no other Glory can redound to Him from any thing without, but what is the Reflection of his own natural Rays. He underſtands Himſelf too well, to value Himſelf either the more or the leſs for the Praiſes or Diſpraiſes of His Creatures. For he is enough of Stage and Theatre to Himſelf, and hath the ſame ſatiſfying Proſpect of his own *Glory* in the midſt of all the loud *Blaſphemies* of *Hell*, as among the perpetual *Hallelujah's of Heaven*. And having ſo, it cannot be ſuppoſed that he ſhould enjoin us to Praiſe and Glorifie Him for the ſake of any Good or Advantage that can accrue to *Himſelf* by it, or

out

out of any other pleaſure he takes in hearing himſelf applauded and commended by us, than he doth in any other Act that is decent and reaſonable in its own Nature; but 'tis *therefore*, he will have us Praiſe him, becauſe he knows it is for *Our* Good, and highly conduces, as it is a moſt reaſonable Action, to the Perfection and Happineſs of our reaſonable Natures; becauſe our Praiſing Him, naturally excites us to imitate Him, and to tranſcribe into *our own* Natures thoſe Adorable Perfections which we do ſo admire and extol in His. So that to purſue our own Perfection and Happineſs, is to Glorifie God according to his own deſign and intention; who requires us to Glorifie *him* for no other purpoſe, but that thereby we may Glorifie *our ſelves*. And indeed *our* Happineſs is *God*'s Glory, even as *all* other worthy *Effects* are the Glory of their *Cauſes*. 'Tis *He* that gives being to it, and conſequently *He* that is glorified by it. It being nothing but the reſplendency of his own Almighty Goodneſs, or his own out-ſtretched Rays ſhining back upon Himſelf. And therefore *we* aim at God's Glory juſt as *He himſelf* doth, when we aim to be as happy as He would have us, that is, when we purſue Heaven, and co-operate with his Infinite Goodneſs, whoſe great deſign is to advance us to that bleſſed condition in which we ſhall Glorifie him for ever, and be everlaſting Monuments of his overflowing Benignity. So that whether we call our laſt End *Heaven*, or the *Glory of God*, it is all but one and the ſame thing; ſince by obtaining Heaven, we ſhall Glorifie him according to his own *Deſign* and *Intention*. And this, I think,

may suffice to shew, what is the true ultimate *End* of the *Christian Life*. But then,

II. It will be yet further necessary, for our clearing the way to the Design in hand, to enquire what *kind* of *Happiness* this is: Which when we understand, we shall be the better able to comprehend what *Duties* or *Means* are necessary for the obtaining it. And this Enquiry will be easily resolved, by considering the Nature of *Those* for whom it was prepared and intended. For all *Happiness* consists in the *free* and *vigorous Exercise* of the Faculties of Nature, about Objects that are suitable to themselves. There is indeed a *privative* happiness, which is nothing but *Indolence*, or *freedom* from *pain* and *misery*; and this consists not so much in the *Exercise*, as in the *rest* and *quiet* of the Faculties. And herein the soft and restive *Epicureans* placed the whole Happiness of a Man: In which, I confess they would not be very much mistaken, if there were no happiness belonging to a Man beyond that Animal and Sensual one, in which the Disciples of this *Atheistical Philosopher* placed their chief Good. For the greatest part of the Pleasure of Sense, indeed, are merely *Privations* of Misery, and short Reprieves from the Griefs and Troubles of a wretched Life. For what else is our *Ease* and *Rest*, but only the removal of our *Pain* and *Weariness*? which being removed, the Pleasure is presently over, and then we grow weary again of our *Rest* and *Ease*; till *Pain* and *Weariness* return and sweeten them, and gives them a fresh and new relish. For when we are weary of *Rest*, we are fain to recreate our selves with *Action*; and when we

we are weary of *Action*, to refresh our selves with *Rest*, and so round again in the same Circle. Thus the greatest part of the pleasure of *Eating* and *Drinking* consists in asswaging the pain of our *Hunger* and *Thirst*. For when *this* is over, you see the pleasure ceases; and till it returns again, every fresh morsel is but a new load to a tired Digestion. So that, in short, the greatest part of those *sensual Felicities* which we do here enjoy, are only short intermissions of the *pains* and *uneasinesses* of a wretched Life. But if there were no other *Happiness* belonging to a Man, but what consists in not being sensible of *Misery*, it were much more desirable to be a *Stone* than a *Man*; and the only way for him to be perfectly Happy, would be, to deprive himself of all *Sense* and *Perception*.

'Tis true, That which is *positive* in our Happiness can never be perfectly enjoyed by us, without a perfect *Indolence* and *Insensibility* of *Pain*; it being impossible for us to have a *perfect Sense* of any thing, whilst we have the least touch or feeling of its *Contrary*. But were *Happiness* nothing else but a *non-perception* of *Misery*, it would have no *positive* Essence or Reality of its own, which is directly contrary to all humane Experience. For we plainly feel, that our *Happiness* hath in it, not only a *Rest* from *Evil*, but a *grateful Motion to Good*: and that as our *Pain* and *Misery* consists in an *acute* and *sensible perception* of such things as are most ungrateful to our Natures; so *Pleasure* or *Satisfaction* consists in a *vigorous perception* of the contrary. So that besides *the not being miserable* (which is not so properly an *Essential Part* of Happiness, as a necessary *Disposition* to it, without

which the Faculties of our Natures will be indisposed to relish and perceive it) there is a *positive Happiness*, which (as I said before) consists in a *constant*, *free* and *vigorous Exercise* of the Faculties about such Objects as are most convenient and suitable to their Natures. For *Happiness* in the general includes *Perfection* and *Pleasure*, both which are necessarily included in *such* an Exercise of the Faculties. For *then* the Faculties are *Perfect*, *when* they are *freely*, *constantly* and *vigorously* employed about such Objects as are most congruous to their several natures; when they are recovered from all *indispositions*, whether *natural* or *moral*, to those proper motions and exercises for which they were framed; and do freely, constantly, and without any clog or interruption direct all their courses towards such Objects as are their natural Centers. And *then* the Faculties are most *pleas'd* and *delighted* too, *when* they are most vigorously exercised about that which is most suitable to them; when they are not only determined to such Objects as are most agreeable to their Natures, but do also act upon and exert themselves towards them with the greatest *Sprightliness* and *Vigour*.

These things I thought meet to premise concerning *Happiness* in the *general*, as being very needful to the clearer resolution of the present Enquiry, *viz.* Wherein consists the *Heaven* or *Happiness* of a *Man*. In short therefore, the proper *Heaven* and *Happiness* of a *Man*, considered as a *rational Being*, consists in the *constant*, *free*, and *sprightful* Exercise of his Faculties about such Objects as are most convenient to his *rational Nature*,

Nature, which consisting wholly of *Understanding*, and *Will*, that is, of a Faculty of *Knowing*, and a Faculty of *Chusing*, the most suitable Objects of it are such as are most worthy to be *known*, and most worthy to be *chosen*. When therefore the *Understanding* is always *vigorously* exercised in seeing and contemplating the most glorious and excellent *Truths*, and the *Will* is always *vigorously* employed in chusing and embracing the most desirable *Goods*, then is the whole Rational Nature *Happy*. Now if you cast abroad your Thoughts over the whole extent of *Being*, you will presently find that there is nothing in it so worthy to be *known* and *chosen* as *God*, whose Power being the Source and Fountain of all *Truth*, that is, of all that either *is* or is *possible*, and whose Nature being the Subject of all *rational Perfection*, wherein it originally resides, and from whence 'tis derived to all the Rational Creation; you must upon these accounts necessarily allow *Him* to be infinitely the most worthy Object in all the World of *Beings*, for our *Understanding* to *contemplate*, and our *Will* to *chuse*. And if so, then the very Life and Quintessence of the *Heaven* of a *Man* considered as a *Reasonable Being*, must needs consist in a close and intimate *Knowledge* of God, and a Free and Uncontroverted *Choice* of Him.

But that we may more fully comprehend the Nature of this *Happiness*, it will be needful that we should more distinctly explain what these two Essential *Acts* of it do import, and what *Happiness* is included in them. And,

I. The *Happiness* of a *Man* consists in a free and intimate *Knowledge* of God. For our *Under-*

ſtanding hath naturally as ſtrong an Appetite to *Truth*, as our *Stomach* hath to *Food*, and as grateful a reliſh of it, when it hath once diſcover'd it, as an *hungry Man* hath of a *pleaſant Morſel*. And though in this life its *Appetite* is many times *pall'd* and *deadned*, partly through the *difficulty* of *knowing*, occaſion'd either by the natural *indiſpoſitions* of its Organs, or the inveterate *prejudices* of a bad Education; and partly by being continually employed in *ſecular cares* and *purſuits*, which do perpetually *divert*, and ſo by degrees *wean* it from its natural inclination to *Truth*: Yet when we go from this World, and leave theſe cauſes behind us, which give ſuch a check to its *Appetite*, doubtleſs its hunger after *Knowledge* will immediately revive, and there will be no poſſibility of ever ſatisfying it without *it*.

Suppoſe we then the future World to be inhabited with a company of *Intellectual Beings*, that do all moſt *vehemently gaſp* after the *knowledge* of *Truth*; What can there be imagined more grateful to them, than to be admitted to the very Fountain of all *Truth* and *Reality*, there to quench their Thirſt, and ſatisfie their infinite Deſires, with the *free* and *eaſie*, but *ſtill freſh* Diſcoveries of his infinite *Glories* and *Perfections*? Where will they be able to fix their *greedy Eyes* with comparably that Pleaſure and Delight, as upon the Myſterious *Tri-une-Divinity*, which is the Eternal *Author* of all *Being*, the *Root* of all *Good*, and the *Rule* and *Source* of all *Perfection*? But then ſuppoſing, what is the caſe of theſe *Bleſſed Contemplators*, that their Minds are ſo *raiſed*, and their Apprehenſions are rendred ſo *unſpeakably quick* and *ſagacious*,

gacious, as that they can *All* know whatſoever they have a mind to, without the *difficulty* of *Study*; and preſently diſcern the Dependence and Connexion of Things, without any *puzling Diſcourſe*, or *laborious Deduction*: with what incomparable Satisfaction muſt they needs peruſe that infinite *Volume* of the Divine *Being* and *Perfections*.

Now that in that *Bleſſed State* they have unſpeakably *clearer* and more *perſpicuous* apprehenſions of Things, than ever they had *here*, that *noble* paſſage of S. *Paul* aſſures us, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then ſhall I know, even alſo as I am known*: that is, now our *Knowledge* of Divine Things is very *obſcure* and *imperfect*, they being ſhewn us as it were through a glaſs, on purpoſe to give us but a *glympſe* of them; but when we come to *Heaven*, we ſhall *look cloſe* upon them, and have a far *clearer*, and more *diſtinct* apprehenſion of them. Then we ſhall *know* God as truly as He *knows* us, and have as *real* and *certain* Apprehenſions of his *All-glorious Being*, as He hath of Ours. So that in *Heaven*, you ſee, the *Eyes* of thoſe *Bleſſed Minds*, that inhabit it, are ſo *invigorated*, that they can gaze upon the Sun without *dazling*; contemplate the pure and immaculate Glories of the Deity, without being *confounded* with their *brightneſs*; and their Underſtanding being thus *exalted*, they muſt needs apprehend more at *one ſingle view*, than we can do in *volumes* of Diſcourſe, and *tedious long trains* of Deduction.

And then enjoying as they do, a moſt *perfect repoſe*, both from *within* and *without* them, they

are never *disturbed* in their *eager contemplations*; which having such a vast *Horizon* of *Truth* and *Glory* round about them, are still discovering farther and farther, and so *continually* entertain'd with fresh *Wonders* and *Delights*. What an infinite deal of Pleasure then must that *All-glorious Object* afford to such *raised* and *elevated* Minds, which, like *transparent Windows*, let in, without any Labour or Difficulty, all that *Divine* and *Heavenly Light* which freely offers it self unto, and shines for ever round about them; and which, by every *new* Discovery of God, and of these *bottomless Secrets* and *Mysteries* of his Nature, are still enlarged to discover *more*, and still have *new* Discoveries offering themselves, as fast as they are enlarged to receive them. This *of it self* is so great a part of Heaven, that S. *John* himself seems to be at a loss how to imagine any Heaven *beyond* it, 1 John iii. 2. *Beloved, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like him*, that is, in Glory and Happiness, *for we shall see him as he is*. But then,

II. The *Heaven* or *Happiness* of a *Man* consists also in a free and undistracted *choice* of God; that is, in *chusing* him for the Rule and Pattern of our *Natures*, and for the Object of our *Love Adoration* and *Dependence*; all which (as I shall shew hereafter) are *Beatifical Acts*, and do abundantly contribute to the *Happiness* of *Reasonable Creatures*. For *Happiness* (as hath been premised) consists not in *Rest*, but in *Motion*; and there is no *Motion* can contribute to the *Happiness* of any Being, but what is suitable to its own Nature.

Nature. Now, what *Motion* can be more ſuitable to the Nature of a *Reaſonable Creature*, than to Love and Adore the Author of its *Being* and *Well-being*; to bow to the *Will* of the *Almighty Sovereign*; and to imitate the *Perfections* of the *Supreme Standard* and *Pattern* of all *Reaſonable Beings*; to rely and depend on his *infinite Power*, that is always conducted by his *infinite Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*; all which are founded upon ſo many ſtrong, evident and undeniable *Reaſons*, that the very naming of them is ſufficient to juſtifie them to our Faculties, and demonſtrate them to be infinitely agreeable to the moſt *fundamental Principles* of our *Reaſonable Nature*. And being ſo, it is impoſſible but that of themſelves they ſhould be exceeding *joyous* and *bliſsful*; for as the *Senſitive* Nature is moſt gratified with thoſe Acts that have moſt of *Senſe* in them, ſo is the *Rational* with thoſe that have moſt of *Reaſon* in them. And certainly thoſe have moſt *Reaſon* in them, which are terminated upon Objects which moſt *deſerve* them; And what Objects can ſo well *deſerve* to be acted upon by *Reaſonable Beings*, as God? or what *Acts* can they ſo reaſonably exert upon him, as thoſe of *Love* and *Adoration*, *Homage* and *Imitation*, *Truſt* and *Dependence*? But as no *Acts* of *Senſe* can be very grateful to our *Senſitive Nature*, ſo long as we exert them either with *repugnance*, or *indifferency*, ſo neither can any Acts of *Reaſon* be to our *Rational*; the Pleaſure of all Acts, whether *Senſitive* or *Rational*, conſiſting (as I ſhew'd before) in the *Sprightfulneſs* and *Vigour* of them. And this is the cauſe why Men *now* find ſo little Felicity in theſe moſt *Rational* Acts of *Godlineſs*, becauſe

becauſe by their own *bad cuſtoms* they have rendered themſelves *averſe*, or at leaſt very *cold* and *indifferent* to them, which neceſſarily renders us *dead* and *liſtleſs* in the exerciſe of them, and conſequently cauſes them to go off with *little guſt*, if not with an *ungrateful reliſh*. But even in this *imperfect ſtate*, we find, by experience, that the more our *corrupted nature* diſcharges and diſburdens it ſelf of thoſe *vicious indiſpoſitions* which do ſo *cramp* and *arreſt* it in theſe its *Heavenly Operations*, the more it is *pleaſed* ſtill and *delighted* in them; Yea, and that when it is ſo far inured to a *Godly Life*, as to be able to practiſe the ſeveral *vertues* of it, but with the ſame degree of *activity* and *vigour* as 'twas wont to do its moſt *beloved Luſts*, it is unſpeakably more *pleaſed* and *ſatisfied*, and finds more *Sweetneſs* by a thouſand degrees, in its *Love* and *Adoration*, *Obedience* and *Imitation of God*, than ever it did in the higheſt reliſhes of *Epicuriſm* and *Senſuality*; that the more perfectly we *Love* and *Adore*, &c. the more of *Heaven* we taſte in theſe *Bleſſed Acts*; and that, when by a *long* and *conſtant* practice of them we have once render'd them *natural* to us, we enjoy ſuch an *Heaven upon Earth*, in the *eaſie*, *free* and *vigorous exerciſe* of them, as we would not exchange for all the Pleaſures and Felicities which the World can afford us. And yet, God knows, the moſt perfect ſtate of *Godlineſs* which we attain to *here*, hath ſo many degrees of *Imperfection* in it, and in this we are ſo diſturbed and interrupted by *bodily Indiſpoſitions*, and the *troubles* and *neceſſities* of this preſent Life, that from the *Joy* and *Pleaſure* which reſults from it here, we can hardly

gueſs

gueſs at thoſe *raviſhing Felicities* which will ſpring out of it *hereafter*. When we ſhall be perfectly releaſed from all the Encumbrances of *fleſh* and *blood*, and *ſin*; when we ſhall be tranſlated into a *free* and *quiet ſtate*, wherein we ſhall have nothing elſe to do, but only to *know* and *love*, *obey* and *imitate*, and have no *imperfection* either *natural* or *vicious*, to clog or diſturb us in this our *Beatifical Employment*. Wherein we ſhall act with all our *vigour* and *might*, and thruſt forth the whole *ſtrength* of our Souls in every *Love*, and every *Obedience*; ſo that every *motion* of our *Souls* towards God, ſhall have the *Vehemence* of a Rapture in it, without the *Violence*. When, I ſay, we ſhall be *eternally* fixed in a ſtate of ſuch perfect *Freedom* and *Activity*, our *Happineſs* muſt needs be as large as our *Deſires*, and as great as our utmoſt *Capacity* or *Power* of *Acting upon God*. For now we ſhall *imitate* the moſt *Perfect*, and *adore* the moſt *Adorable*, as much as *ever* we are *able*; that is, we ſhall perform with all our *might* and *vigour* the Acts that are moſt agreeable to our *Reaſonable Nature*: And in the utmoſt *vigour* of ſuch *Acts* (as I have already ſhewed) conſiſts our utmoſt *Happineſs*.

Suppoſe we then a Society of *Rational Beings* placed in ſuch a ſtate, wherein they have an Object of *infinite Perfections* always before them, and no Evil from *without* or *within* to check or divert them from exerting *all their Powers* upon him in the moſt *reaſonable Actions*: Suppoſe them now to be moving with *unſpeakable vigour* and *agility*, like ſo many *ever-living Orbs* about this their *everlaſting Center*; to be as full of *Love* and *Duty* to him

him as ever their *Hearts* can hold; to be *copying* his *Perfections*, and *adoring* his *Excellencies* with an uncontroulable *Freedom* and *Alacrity*, and breathing forth themselves to him in *chearful Praises*, and *rapturous Hallelujah's*; in a word to be exercising themselves about him to their utmost *Strength* and *Power*, in all those *blessed Offices* which *his* Nature and *their* Relation to him call for: Suppose, I say, *all this*, and you have before ye that which is the very *top* and *flower* of the *Heaven* of a *reasonable Creature*; who in this *blessed state* is fixed, as it were, in his own proper *Element*, where, without any *lett* or *disturbance*, he freely *moves* and *acts* according to his most *natural Tendence* and *Inclination*.

And now, by this time, I think it is clear enough, that the *main* and *principal Part* of the *Heaven* of a *Man*, considered as a *reasonable Creature*, consists in *Knowing* and *Chusing* of God. But besides *this*, there are other blessed *Ingredients* of Heaven; the *principal* whereof, is, the Knowing and Chusing *those* that are *most like* unto God; namely, the *blessed Jesus* in his *Humane Nature*, and the *Holy Angels* and *Saints*, who are *all* in their several Measures and Degrees the express and lively *Images* of God. And therefore if to Know, and Chuse God be the *supreme* Felicity of Heaven, then doubtless the *next* to *that*, is, to *Know* and be *Acquainted* with these blessed *Images* of him, and freely to *Chuse* their *Company* and *Conversation*, and be entirely *united* to them in *Affection*; without which, it would be no Felicity to dwell in the *same place* with them. For to *co-habit* with Jesus, and with Saints and Angels, and

and not be *acquainttd with*, and *united* to them in *Heart* and *Affection*, would be rather a *Burden* than a *Pleaſure*. The Happineſs therefore of being in their *Society*, conſiſts in *Knowing* and *Chuſing* them. And this is every where implied, where our being with *them* is mention'd as a part of our Heaven. Thus, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 17. to *be ever with the Lord*, is the ſame thing with being *ever in Heaven*: but then, 'tis to be ever with him upon *Choice*; for ſo thoſe words imply, *Phil.* i. 23. *I deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which is far better.* And accordingly this is mention'd by the Apoſtle, as a *dear Privilege* of our being Members of the *Chriſtian Church*, whereby we are entituled to the Society of *Holy Myriads of Angels, of the general Aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born, of God the Judge of all, of the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, and of Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant*, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. And indeed this muſt needs be an *ineſtimable Happineſs*, not only to *cohabit*, but be *acquainted with*, and in Heart and Will *united* to this Bleſſed and Glorious Company. For what Soul that has any *Spark* of Cordial Love to Jeſus, the *beſt Friend* of *Souls* that ever was, any *grateful remembrance* of what he *did* and *ſuffered* for our ſakes, would not eſteem it a *mighty Felicity* to be admitted into his *Preſence*, and to be an *Eye-witneſs* of the happy Change of his paſt *woful* Circumſtances? To ſee him that was ſo *cruelly treated*, ſo barbarouſly *vilified*, *tortured* and *butchered* for our ſakes, *raiſed* to the higheſt pitch of Splendour and Dignity, to be *Head* and *Prince* of all the *Hierarchy* of Heaven, to be *worſhipped* and *celebrated* throughout all the noble *Choir* of *Arch-Angels*

gels and *Angels* and *Spirits of just men made perfect?* Verily methinks had I only the Privilege to *look in* and *see* my dear and blessed Lord *surrounded* with all this *Circle* of Glories, it would be a most *Heavenly Consolation* to me, though I were sure never to *partake* of it. The very *Communion* I should have in the *Joys* of my *Master*, would be a kind of Heaven at *Second-hand* to me, and my Soul would be wondrous Happy by *Sympathizing* with him in his *Felicity* and *Advancement*. But, Oh! when that *Blessed Person* shall not only *permit* me to *see* his Glory, but *introduce* me into it, and make me *partaker* of it; when I shall not only *behold his Beloved Face*, but be *admitted* into his *Dear Conversation*, and *dwell* in his *Arms* and *Embraces* for ever; when I shall hear him record the *wondrous Adventures* of his Love, through how many *woful Stages* he pass'd to rescue me from *Misery*, and make me *Happy*, and in the mean time shall have a most *ravishing Feeling* of *that* Happiness; how will my Heart *spring* with *Joy*, and *burn* with *Love*, and my Mouth *o'erflow* with *Praises* and *Thanksgivings* to him!

And as our Acquaintance with, and Choice of the *Blessed Jesus* must needs contribute vastly to our Happiness; so must also (though not in so *high* a Degree) our being *intimately acquainted* and *united* with *Saints* and *Angels*. Who being not only endowed with large and comprehensive *Understandings*, but also with perfect *Good Nature*, and most generous *Charity*, must needs make *excellent Company*. For as their *Goodness* cannot but render their Conversation infinitely *free* and *benign*, so their great *Knowledge* must necessarily render

render it equally *profitable* and *delightful*. And then being ſo *Knowing* as they are, they muſt needs be ſuppoſed to *underſtand* all the *wiſe Arts* of *Endearment*; and being ſo *Good*, they muſt be alſo ſuppoſed to be continually *practiſing* them. And if ſo, what a *Heavenly Converſation* muſt theirs be, the *Scope* whereof is the moſt *glorious Knowledge*, and the *Law* whereof is the moſt *perfect Friendſhip*? Who would not be willing to leave a *fooliſh*, *froward*, and *ill-natur'd* World, for the bleſſed Society of theſe *wiſe Friends*, and *perfect Lovers*? And what a Felicity muſt it be, to ſpend an Eternity in ſuch a *noble* Converſation! Where we ſhall hear the *deep Philoſophy* of Heaven communicated with *mutual Freedom* in the Wiſe and Amicable Diſcourſes of *Angels* and *Glorified Spirits*; who without any *Reſerve*, or *affectation of Myſtery*, without *Paſſion* or *Intereſt*, or *peeviſh Contention* for *Victory*, do *freely* Philoſophize, and *mutually* impart the Treaſures of each other's *Knowledge*. For ſince all *Saints* there are great *Philoſophers*, and all *Philoſophers* perfect *Saints*, we muſt needs ſuppoſe *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs*, *Wiſdom* and *Charity* to be equally intermingled throughout all their Converſation; and being ſo, what can be imagined more delightful! When therefore we ſhall leave this *impertinent* and *unſociable* World; and all our *good old Friends* that are gone to Heaven before us, ſhall meet us as ſoon as we are landed upon the ſhore of Eternity, and with infinite Congratulations for our ſafe Arrival, ſhall conduct us into the Company of the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs*, and introduce us into an *intimate* Acquaintance with them, and with

with all those *brave* and *generous* Souls who by their glorious Examples have recommended themselves to the World; when we shall be *familiar Friends* with *Angels* and *Arch-Angels*, and all the *Courtiers* of Heaven shall call us *Brethren*, and bid us *Welcome* to their *Master*'s *Joy*, and we shall be received into their glorious Society with all the tender Endearments and Caresses of those *Heavenly Lovers*; what a *mighty* Addition to our Happiness will this be!

There are indeed some other Additions to the Happiness of Heaven; such as the *Glory* and *Magnificence* of the *Place*, which is the *Highest Heaven*, or the upper and purer Tracts of the *Æther*, which our Saviour calls *Paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. and St. *Paul* the *Third Heaven*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. both which, in the phrase of that Age, bespeak it to be a Place of *unspeakable Glory*; for so the Jews do commonly call this blessed Seat, the *Third* or *Angel-bearing* Region of Heaven, by which they denote it to be the *Palace* of the *King* of the whole World, where his most glorious Courtiers do reside; and they also call it *Paradise*, in allusion to the Earthly Paradise of *Eden*; because as *that* was the *Garden* of this *lower* World, so *this* is of the *whole Creation*. And though we have no *exact Description* of this Place in *Scripture*, and that perhaps because no humane Language can describe it; yet since God hath chosen it for the *Everlasting Theatre* of Bliss and Happiness, we may thence reasonably conclude, that he hath most *exquisitely furnish'd* it with all Accommodations requisite to a most *happy* and *blissful* Life.

Besides

Beſides which alſo, there is the *Everlaſting Duration* of it, which is another great Acceſſion to its Happineſs. That ſuch is the Nature of its Enjoyments, as that they do not, like all other Pleaſures, *ſpend* and *waſte* in the Fruition; that though it will be always *feeding* our Faculties with new Delights, yet it will never be *exhauſted*, but be always *equally*, becauſe *infinitely*, diſtant from a Period. So that its Happineſs conſiſting of an *infinite Variety* of Pleaſure extended to an *infinite Duration*, it will be impoſſible for thoſe that enjoy it to be either *cloy'd* with the repetition of it, or *tormented* with the fear of loſing it.

But theſe *Two laſt* I only mention, becauſe they do not ſo properly belong to our preſent Argument; which is only to explain the Nature of *Heaven* ſo far as is neceſſary to the right underſtanding of the Nature of thoſe *Means* by which it is to be attained.

Now from what hath been ſaid concerning this great *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*, theſe *Two* things are to be inferr'd concerning the *Nature* of it.

I. That the *main* of Heaven conſiſts not ſo much in any *outward* Poſſeſſion, as in an *inward* State and Temper. For though Heaven be, doubtleſs, a moſt *glorious Place*, and all its bleſſed *Inhabitants* do poſſeſs and hold it by an everlaſting *Tenure*; yet 'tis a great miſtake to imagine that the main Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in living for ever in a *glorious Place*, which ſeparated from all the reſt of Heaven, would be but a *poor* and *hungry* kind of Happineſs. For *Life* is no otherwiſe a Happineſs, than as it is the Principle of all our

pleaſant and *grateful Perceptions*; and if we could live for ever without *perceiving*, it would be the ſame thing to us, as if we were nothing but a company of everlaſting *Stones* and *Trees*; and what great matter would it ſignifie to live for ever in a *glorious Place*, unleſs we could be for ever affected by it with a *delightful ſenſe* and *perception:* which is impoſſible; becauſe all *delightful ſenſe* (as hath already been proved) ariſes out of the *vigorous exerciſe* of our Faculties about ſuch Objects as are ſuitable to them; but what can there be in the moſt *glorious Place* ſo ſuitable to a *Rational Mind* and *Will*, as to keep them for ever *vigorouſly* employed and exerciſed about it? It may, indeed, for a while, employ the *Mind* in an eager Contemplation of its *new* and *ſurprizing* Beauties; but how ſoon would the Mind diſ-reliſh it, were it to be its *only* entertainment for Eternity? And as for the *Will*, what would a fine Place ſignifie to it, if it were not repleniſh'd with ſuch Objects as are ſuitable to its own *Options?* And indeed, there is nothing that can *everlaſtingly* gratifie a Rational Mind and Will, but what has in it ſuch and *Infinity* of *Truth* as is everlaſtingly *Knowable*, and ſuch an *Infinity* of *Goodneſs* as is everlaſtingly *Deſirable*; or, which is the ſame thing, nothing but what hath *Truth* enough in it for the one to be vigorouſly *contemplating* for ever, and nothing but what hath *Goodneſs* enough in it for the other to be as vigorouſly *loving*, *adoring*, and *imitating* for ever. And ſuch an Infinitude of *Truth* and *Goodneſs* is no where to be found but in *God*. But *God*, as well as the *Place*, and *Duration* of Heaven, being an Object that is *external* to us, neither is, nor

nor can be a Happineſs to us, unleſs we *act upon* him, and *freely exerciſe* our Faculties about him; unleſs we *Know* him, and *Love* him, *&c.* So that *that* which *felicitates* all, is our own *Internal Act*; 'tis by *this* that we enjoy Heaven, and perceive all the Pleaſures of it. 'Tis not by *being in Heaven* that Men are conſtituted Happy, but by *vigorouſly exerting* their Faculties upon the Heavenly Objects. For without *this*, to be *in* Heaven or *out of it* would be indifferent to us. The Happineſs of Heaven therefore conſiſts in a *ſtate* of *Heavenly Action*; in being ſo *attempered* and *connaturaliz'd* to the Objects of Heaven, as to be always *acting upon*, and *chearfully employing* our Faculties about them. For as there is no Pleaſure in Acting *coldly* upon *ſuitable* Objects, ſo there is Pain and Trouble in acting *vigorouſly* upon *unſuitable* ones. And therefore to make *Heaven* it ſelf a *Happineſs* to us, 'tis neceſſary not only that we ſhould act vigorouſly upon the Objects of it, but that we ſhould *ſo act* from a *ſuitableneſs* of Temper to them. That we ſhould contemplate God, ſubmit to his Will, adore and imitate his Perfections from a *God-like Temper* and *Diſpoſition*. For otherwiſe theſe Acts will be *Penances* inſtead of *Pleaſures* to us; and the more *intenſely* we exert them, the more *painful* they will be. And if we were in Heaven, all that Heavenly Exerciſe in which the Happineſs of it conſiſts, would be but a *Torment* and *Vexation* to us, unleſs we had a *Heavenly Temper*. For as the Parts of *Matter* can never *reſt*, but do move about in a perpetual *Whirl-pool*, till they *hit* into a place or *Interſtice* that is of the ſame *Form* and *Figure* with them; ſo there is nothing can *reſt* in Heaven but

what is *Heavenly*. All that is otherwise *rebounds* and *flies off* of its own accord, and can never *acquiesce* there, till 'tis of the same Form, and Temper, and Disposition with it. From hence therefore it's evident, that the Happiness of a Man in *Heaven* consists not so much in the *outward* Glory of the Place, as in the *inward* State of his own Mind, which from a *suitableness* of Temper to the Heavenly Objects doth always *freely* employ and exercise its Faculties about them.

II. That the *Heavenly State* is nothing else but the *Perfection* of all *Heavenly Vertue*. For it hath been already proved, That Heaven consists in a clear and intimate *Knowledge*, and a free and uncontested *Choice* of God, and of those Blessed Beings that resemble him; and *these Two* comprehend *all* Heavenly Vertue. So that the difference between the state of *Grace* and *Glory* is not in *Kind*, but in *Degree*. For Grace is the *Seed* of Glory, and Glory is the *Maturity* of Grace. 'Tis *Knowledge* exalted above all *Error* and *Prejudice*, above all *Difficulty* or *Obscurity* of Apprehension; 'tis *Love* strained from all *repugnancies* of Flesh and Spirit, and refined into a pure *Celestial flame*; 'tis *Obedience* to, and *Imitation* of God, perfectly separated from all *sinful* Defects, and freed from the *Clog* of *counter-striving* Principles; 'tis *Adoration* of, and *Dependency* upon him, without the least degree of *Indisposition* or *Despondency*; in a word, 'tis a *free* and *uncontrolled* Motion of all the Heavenly Vertues together, in which they are every one most *vigorously* exerted, without the least *Check* or *Impediment*. This therefore being the *State* of *Heaven*, as is evident from what hath been discoursed,

courſed, it hence follows, that the main difference between *Vertue* and *Heaven*, is only *gradual*; that Vertue is the *Beginning* of Heaven, and Heaven is the *Perfection* of Vertue. And if ſo, then as the *loweſt* Degree of true Vertue is a *ſtep* Heaven-wards, ſo every *farther* Degree is a *nearer Approach* towards the Heavenly State. So that as we *grow* in Grace, and proceed from *one* Degree of Vertue to *another*, we draw *nearer* and *nearer* to that bleſſed Condition in which we ſhall be all *pure Vertue*, without any *ſinful* Alloy or Intermixture. And this is the true *State* and *Condition* of Heaven.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the Means *by which this Great* End *of the* Chriſtian Life *is to be attained.*

IT is to be conſider'd, That the great Deſign of Chriſtianity being to *advance* our Natures to ſuch a ſublime Degree of Purity and Perfection as is requiſite to capacitate us for the Enjoyment of a *Heavenly Bliſs*, it was neceſſitated, in order hereunto, to ſtrain our Duty to a greater *height* than any *preceding* Law had done before it. For the *End* of all God's *Laws* is the *Happineſs* of his *Subjects*; and therefore that they may be effectual *Means* to promote this *End*, it's neceſſary that the *Duties* they enjoin ſhould be ſuch as the *Nature* of our Happineſs requires. Now in the firſt ſtate

of our Nature, which was that of *Innocence*; we ſeem to have been deſign'd only for a *Terreſtrial Paradiſe*, that is, to enjoy the Pleaſures of a pure Mind inhabiting a ſenſitive and animal Body; and therefore had we ſtood, (which God foreſaw we ſhould not, and therefore deſign'd us for a more raiſed and heavenly condition) our happineſs would have been what it is now in this world, though in a higher degree, *viz.* a compound of ſpiritual and bodily delights, to be enjoy'd in a ſtate of earthly immortality, which would have been of a much inferior nature to that pure ſtate of ſpiritual happineſs whereunto we are now deſigned and directed: And to ſerve this former end in the poſſeſſion of which Man was placed in the ſtate of *Innocence*, God gave him the *Law of Nature*, which ſeems to have been nothing elſe but only *Right Reaſon* dictating to us what is neceſſary to be done, in order to this our *Earthly Happineſs*. And accordingly the Duties of this Law were of a much *lower* ſtrain than the Duties of Chriſtianity; they being intended for the Means and Inſtruments of a much *lower* Happineſs. For in this our *Earthly* and *Animal* State, Right Reaſon could require nothing of us but what was ſubſervient to our *Earthly* and *Animal* Felicity; which was only a mixture of bodily and mental, ſenſitive and rational pleaſure, and nothing could be *good* for us but what tended thereunto, nothing *evil* but what did obſtruct and oppoſe it. But now that our Happineſs is placed in *another* World, and in ſuch *vaſtly different* Enjoyments from thoſe of a Terreſtrial Paradiſe, we muſt proceed upon *other* Principles. For now every

every Action is Good or Bad, Wiſe or Fooliſh, as it *ſerves* or *hinders* our Happineſs in the World to come. And therefore it is highly reaſonable that now we ſhould live at a *different rate* than what we were obliged to in that *Animal* ſtate wherein we were firſt created; that we ſhould ſubmit our *earthly* to our *heavenly* Intereſt, and renounce the Joys and Pleaſures of *this* Life, whenſoever they ſtand in competition with the *ſpiritual* Felicities of the *Life to come*. *Now* we are no longer to look upon this World as our *Native Country*, but as a *Foreign Land*; and ſo we are to reckon our ſelves *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* upon Earth; and accordingly to uſe the Conveniencies of this Life as *Strangers* do their *Inns*, not to abide or take up our habitation in them, but only to bait and away, and refreſh our ſelves, that ſo we may be the better enabled to perform our Journey to the Eternal World. For the ſcene of our *Happineſs* being ſhifted from an Earthly Immortality, to an Heavenly; and conſequently the Happineſs it ſelf being now much more *ſublime* and *pure* and *ſpiritual* than it would have been, had it not continued Earthly; it's neceſſary that our Nature ſhould be *exalted* with it, and that we ſhould be *raiſed* as high above the *condition* of meer Earthly Creatures, as *that* is above the *rank* and *quality* of an Earthly Happineſs; otherwiſe it will be impoſſible for us to reliſh and enjoy it.

Now every Agent hath need of *more* or *fewer* Means proportionably as he is *farther off*, or *nearer* to the End he drives at. As for inſtance, the Husbandman that hath a *fat* and *fruitful* Soil to ſow his Seed in, is *nearer* to the attaining of a good

Harveſt, than he that hath a *barren* or *ſtony* Ground to work upon; and therefore hath much *leſs* to do. For whereas the latter, before he can plough and ſow, muſt manure his Ground, and gather out the Stones of it; the former needs only plough up the fertile Earth, and caſt his Seed into it. Or, to come cloſer to the caſe in hand; a Man that is meerly *ignorant* is in a much *nearer* capacity of true Knowledge, than he whoſe Mind is altogether prejudiced with *erroneous* Principles; and therefore needs much *fewer* Helps and Means to attain it. For *his* Mind being perfectly diſengaged, is like a fair Paper, on which as there is nothing *writ*, ſo there is nothing to be *blotted out*; So that all that he hath to do, is to enquire after and receive the Truth when it is fairly propoſed to him. But as for the *Prejudiced* Man, he hath a great deal to unlearn, before he can be capable of Learning; a great many *falſe* Principles to be expunged, before ever the *true* Notions of Things can be imprinted on his Underſtanding.

If therefore we would take a true Account of all thoſe *Means* that are neceſſary to our attaining of Heaven, we muſt conſider what a *vaſt diſtance* we are from it in this corrupt and degenerate ſtate of our Nature. If we were in a ſtate of *Indifference* between Vertue and Vice, we ſhould be much *nearer* Heaven than we are: For then, as we ſhould be without thoſe *Heavenly Vertues*, in the free Exerciſe whereof the ſtate of Heaven conſiſts; ſo we ſhould be without all that *Repugnance* and *Averſation* to them which renders them ſo difficultly attainable; and our Nature being already in an *Æquilibrium*, would by the leaſt *over-weight* of Motive be preſently enclined to Vertue and Goodneſs. But, alas!

alas! in this *corrupt* ſtate whereinto we are ſunk, our Nature runs Evil-wards with a very ſtrong and prevailing *Biaſs*; and is not only *void* of Vertue, but *averſe* to it. And this ſets us at a far greater diſtance from the bleſſed *End* of our Religion, than otherwiſe we ſhould be. For every degree of vicious Inclination that is in us, is a *Remove* from Heaven, a *Deſcent* from that Perfection of Vertue wherein the Heavenly Bleſſedneſs conſiſts. And if ſo, how *remote* from Heaven are the Generality of Men in the Beginning of their Progreſs thither; when to their natural *Corruption* they have ſuperadded by their ſinful Courſes ſo many inordinate *Inclinations*, and inveterate, ſinful *Habits*; when by a long ſeries of wicked Actions, they have raiſed and blown up their Concupiſcence into ſuch raging *flames* of Luſt as *generally* they do! And being thus far gone back from our *End*, there are ſundry *Means*, which otherwiſe would have been perfectly *needleſs* and *ſuperfluous*, that are now become abſolutely *neceſſary* thereunto. For had we begun our Progreſs towards Heaven from a ſtate of *Indifferency* between Vertue and Vice, we had had no more to do but to practiſe thoſe ſeveral Vertues of Religion, of which the Heavenly Life and State conſiſts; to *love* and to *contemplate*, to *adore* and to *obey* God, and behave our ſelves *juſtly* and *charitably* towards one another; all which would have been ſo *eaſie*, that we ſhould have had no occaſion of any *Inſtrumental Duties* to facilitate them to us. Whereas now ſtarting Heaven-wards, as we generally do, from a moſt *corrupt* and *degenerate* State, there are ſundry *other* Means which we muſt uſe as *Inſtruments* that are neceſſary to our

our acquiring and perſevering in the Vertues of the Heavenly Life; to our conquering the Difficulties, and killing the vicious Averſations of our Natures againſt them: All which would have been *needleſs*, at leaſt in a great meaſure, had not our Nature been ſo *depraved* and *corrupt* as it is.

So that as the caſe *now* ſtands with us, there are *two* ſorts of Means that are neceſſary to our obtaining of Heaven; The firſt is, the Practice of thoſe *Heavenly Vertues*, in the Perfection whereof conſiſts the ſtate of Heaven; The ſecond is, the Practice of certain *Inſtrumental Duties*, which are neceſſary to our acquiring thoſe Heavenly Vertues, and overcoming the Difficulties of them. The firſt ſort of theſe are the *proximate* Means, thoſe which directly and immediately reſpect the Great and Ultimate End; The ſecond, the more *remote* Means, which immediately reſpect thoſe Means that immediately reſpect the *End*. The firſt is like the Art of the *Builder*, which immediately reſpects the Houſe; The ſecond, like the Art of the *Smith*, which immediately reſpects the *Means* and *Inſtruments* of Building.

I. One ſort of Means neceſſary to the obtaining of Heaven, and that which more *directly* and *immediately* reſpects it, is the *Practice* of thoſe *Vertues* in the Perfection whereof the Heavenly Life conſiſts. For we find by experience, that all Heavenly Vertues are to be acquired and perfected only by *Practice*; That as all *bad* Diſpoſitions are acquired and improved into Habits by *bad* Practices and Cuſtoms, ſo are all the contrary *vertuous* ones by the *contrary* Practices. For *Religion* proceeds in the methods of *Nature*, and carries us on from

from the *Acts* to the *Diſpoſitions*, and from the *Diſpoſitions* to the *Habits* of Vertue. And by the ſame method the *Divine Grace* which accompanies Religion, does ordinarily work its Effects upon the Spirits of Men, not by an *inſtantaneous Infuſion* of Vertuous Habits into the Will, but by perſuading them to the *Practice* of thoſe *Vertues* that are contrary to their *vicious Habits*, and to perſiſt in the Practice of them till they have mortified *thoſe* Habits, and throughly habituated and inured themſelves to *theſe*. So that the Grace of God is like a *Graff*, which though it is put into a *Stock* which is quite of *another* kind, doth yet make uſe of the Faculties and Juices of the Stock, and ſo by co-operating with them, converts it by degrees into its *own* Nature. And this is exactly agreeable to the common experience of Men, who in the beginning of their Reformation are ſo far from acting vertuouſly from *Habit* and *Inclination*, that it goes againſt the very *Grain* of their Nature, and they would much rather return to their vicious courſes, if they were not chaſed and purſued by the *Terrors* of an *awakened Conſcience*; and when afterwards they come to act upon a more *ingenuous* Principle, yet ſtill they find in themſelves a great *Averſeneſs* and *Reluctancy* to it, and 'tis a great while uſually e're they arrive to a *Habit* or *Facility* of acting *vertuouſly*. But then by *perſeverance* in the practice of Vertue, they are more and more *enclined* and *diſpoſed* to it, and ſo by degrees it becomes *eaſie* and *natural* to them. If therefore we would ever arrive to that Perfection of Vertue which the Heavenly State implies, it muſt be by the *Practice* of Vertue, by a continual *training* and *exerciſing*

exercising our selves in all the parts of the Heavenly Life, which, by degrees, will *wear off* the *Difficulty* of it, and *adapt* and *familiarize* our Nature to it. Ἃ γὰρ δεῖ μανθάνοντας ποιεῖν, ταῦτα ποιοῦντες μανθάνομεν· *Those things which they that learn ought to do, they learn by doing them.* Thus we learn Devotion by Prayer, Submission to God by Denying our selves, Charity by giving Alms, and Meekness by Forgiving Injuries. And we may as reasonably expect to commence *Learned* without *Study*, as *Vertuous* without the *Practice* of Vertue. Since therefore the Formal Happiness of our Reasonable Natures consists in the Perfection of all the Heavenly Vertues, and 'tis by these alone that we can relish and enjoy the blissful Objects of Heaven; it hence follows, that the *Practice* of those Vertues is the most *direct* and *immediate* Means to obtain the *Blessed End* of our Religion. But then,

II. Another sort of Means necessary to our obtaining of Heaven, consists of certain *Instrumental Duties* by which we are to *acquire*, *improve*, and *perfect* these *Heavenly Vertues*. What these *Means* are, will be hereafter largely shown: All that I shall say of them at present, is, That they are such as are no farther good and useful, than as they are the *Means* of Heavenly Vertue, and do tend towards the *acquiring*, *improving*, and *perfecting* it. For the whole Duty of Man may be distributed into these *Two Generals*, *viz.* The Religion of the *End*, and the Religion of the *Means*. The Religion of the *End*, contains all that *Heavenly Vertue* wherein the *Perfection* and *Happiness* of Humane Nature consists; and this the Apostle distributes into three Particulars, *viz.* *Sobriety*, *Righteousness*,

ouſneſs, and *Godlineſs*. The Religion of the *Means* comprehends all that *Duty* which does either *naturally*, or by *inſtitution*, reſpect and drive at this Religion of the *End*; and that all other Duty, that is not it ſelf a Natural Branch and Part of it, doth reſpect and drive at it, the *Apoſtle* aſſures us, when he tells us, that the *Goſpel*, or *Grace of God*, was revealed from Heaven for this very purpoſe, to teach us to *deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, and righteouſly and godly in this preſent world.* And if we do not uſe the Religion of the *Means* to this purpoſe, it is altogether *uſeleſs* and *inſignificant*. For the purpoſe of all *Religious Duties*, is either,

1. To *reconcile* Men to God, and God to them; or,

2. To *perfect* the Humane Nature; or,

3. To *intitle* Men to Heaven; or,

4. To *qualifie* and *diſpoſe* them for the Heavenly Life. To neither of which the Religion of the *Means* is any farther uſeful, than as it produces and promotes in us thoſe *Heavenly Vertues* which are implied in the Religion of the *End*. For,

I. It is no further uſeful towards the *reconciling* Us to God, and God to Us. For there can be no hearty *Reconciliation* between adverſe Parties, without there be a mutual *Likeneſs*, and *Agreement* of Natures. Now the *Carnal Mind*, (which includes all that is repugnant to the *Heavenly Vertues*) the *Apoſtle* tells us, is *Enmity againſt God*, *Rom.* vii. 17. that is, hath a natural *Antipathy* to the *Purity* and *Goodneſs* of the Divine Nature. And this *Antipathy*, the ſame *Apoſtle* tells us, is founded in our *wicked works*, Coloſ. i. 21. So that though

though we ſhould practiſe never ſo diligently all that is contained in the Religion of the *Means*, though we ſhould *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive Sacraments*, &c. with never ſo much Zeal and Conſtancy; yet all this will be inſignificant, as to the *reconciling* our Natures to God, unleſs it deſtroy in us that *Carnal Mind* and thoſe *wicked Works* which render us ſo averſe to his *Goodneſs*. And though God bears a *hearty Good-will* to all that are capable of *Good*, and *embraces* his whole Creation with the out-ſtretched Arms of his *Benevolence*; yet he cannot be ſuppoſed to be *pleaſed* with, or *delighted* in any but ſuch as *reſemble* Him in thoſe amiable Graces of *Purity* and *Goodneſs* for which he loves *Himſelf*. For he loves not *Himſelf* meerly becauſe he is *Himſelf* (which would be a *blind Inſtinct*, rather than a *Reaſonable Love*) but becauſe he is *Good*; and he loves Himſelf above all *other* things, becauſe he knows Himſelf to be the *Higheſt* and moſt *Perfect* Good: and conſequently He loves all other things proportionably as they *approach* and *reſemble* Him in Goodneſs. And indeed, if He loved *Us* for any other Reaſon beſides that for which he loves *Himſelf*, he would not have *infinite Reaſon* to love *Himſelf*; becauſe he would not have *that* Reaſon to love *Himſelf*, for which he loves and takes delight in *Us*. Since therefore there is nothing but our *Reſemblance* of God can *reconcile* Him to Us, and ſince our *Reſemblance* of Him conſiſts in *Vertue* and true *Goodneſs*, it hence it follows, that all the Religion of the *Means* is inſignificant to our *Reconciliation* with God, if it doth not render us truly *Vertuous*. So that till this is effected, there is ſo vaſt a *Gulph* between

between *God* and Us, that neither *We* can go to *Him*, nor *He* come to *Us*; and unleſs he alter his Nature by becoming *impure* as we are *impure*, or we alter ours by becoming *pure* as He is *pure*, there will be ſo immenſe a *Diſtance* between Him and Us, as that it is impoſſible we ſhould ever *meet* and *agree*. So that what the *Prophet* ſaith of *Sacrifice*, may be truly affirm'd of all Religion of the *Means*, *Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſands of Rivers of Oil?* Will he be reconciled upon our bare *Believing*, *Praying*, or *Receiving Sacraments?* &c. No, no; *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good: And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micah vi. 7, 8.

II. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther uſe as to the *perfecting* our Natures, than as it is inſtrumental to produce and promote in us thoſe *Heavenly Vertues* which are implied in the Religion of the *End*. For doubtleſs, to be a Perfect Man, is to live up to the Higheſt Principle of Humane Nature, which is *Reaſon*; and till we are once releaſed from the ſlavery of *Senſe* and *Paſſion*, and all our Powers of Action are ſo ſubdued to this *ſuperiour* Principle as to be wholly *regulated* by it, and we *chuſe* and *refuſe*, and *love* and *hate*, and *hope* and *fear*, and *deſire* and *delight*, according as right Reaſon directs, we are in a *maimed* and *imperfect* Condition. Now what elſe is *Vertue*, but a Habit of Living according to the *Laws* of *Reaſon*, or of demeaning our ſelves towards God, our ſelves, and all the World, as beſt becomes *Rational Beings* placed in our Condition and Circumſtances? And till we are in ſome meaſure arrived

to

to this, our Nature is so far from being *perfect*, that it is the most *wretched* and *confused* thing in the whole World; a meer undistinguish'd *Chaos*, where *Frigida cum Calidis*, Sense and Reason, Brute and Man, are shuffled together without any order, like a confounded Heap of Ruines. And therefore as for this Religion of the *Means*, it will be altogether insignificant to the *Perfection* of our Natures, unless by the Practice of it we do acquire a habit of acting according to the *Law* of our *Reason*, which *Habit* includes all *Heavenly Vertue*. For constantly to *know* and *do* what is best and most reasonable, is the very Crown and Perfection of every *reasonable Nature*; and therefore so far as our *Faith* and *Consideration*, our *Sorrow* for *Sin*, and the other *Instrumentals* of Religion, promote this *Heavenly Habit* in us, so far are they *perfective* of our Nature, and no *farther*.

III. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther use to Us, as to the *Entitling* us to Heaven, than as it is productive of those *Heavenly Vertues* which the Religion of the *End* implies. For our *Title* to Heaven depending wholly upon God's *Promise*, must immediately result from our Performance of those *Conditions* upon which he hath *promised* it; which till we have done, we can have no more *Claim* or *Title* to it than if he had never *promised* it at all. But the sole Condition upon which he hath *promised* it, is Universal Righteousness and Goodness; for so, *without Holiness*, we are assured that *no man shall see God*; and *Matth.* v. our Saviour intails all the Beatitudes of Heaven upon those Heavenly Vertues of *Purity of Heart*, *Benignity of Temper*, &c. So also, *Rom.* ii. 7. the Promise

Promiſe of Eternal Life is limited to our *patient Continuance in well-doing*. And that we may know before-hand what to truſt to, our Saviour plainly tells us, that *not every one that cries, Lord, Lord*, that make Solemn *Prayers* and *Addreſſes* to me, *ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*; And, *this is the Will of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *even our Sanctification*; that is, our being purged from all Impurities of Fleſh and Spirit, and inſpired with all Heavenly Vertues. And the Apoſtle expreſly enumerates thoſe Vertues upon which our Entrance into Eternal Life is promiſed, 2 *Pet.* i. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Add to your Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godlineſs, and to Godlineſs Brotherly Kindneſs, and to Brotherly Kindneſs Charity; For if theſe things be in you, and abound*, ſaith he, *they make you that you ſhall neither be barren or unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: that is, That you ſhall receive the proper *Fruit* of that *Knowledge*, which is Eternal Life; for thus, *ver.* 11. he goes on; *For ſo*, or upon this Condition, *an Entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly into the Everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. So that unleſs our Faith purifies our Hearts, and works by Love; unleſs our Sorrow for Sin works in us Repentance, or a Change of Mind; unleſs our Prayers raiſe in us Divine and Heavenly Affections, that is, unleſs we ſo *practiſe* the *Duties* of the Religion of the *Means*, as thereby to *acquire* the *Vertues* of the Religion of the *End*, it will be all as inſignificant to our *Title* to Heaven, as the moſt *indifferent* Actions in the World.

IV. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther Use to the *disposing* and *qualifying* us for Heaven, than as it is an effectual Means of the Religion of the *End*. Which is a perfectly distinct Consideration from the former; For it would be no advantage to us to have a *Right* to Heaven, unless we were antecedently *qualified* and *disposed* for it. Because Pleasure, which is a Relative thing, implies a *Correspondence* and *Agreement* between the *Object* and the *Faculty* that tasts and enjoys it. But in the *Temper* of every wicked Mind there is a strong *Antipathy* to the Pleasures of Heaven; which being all *chaste*, and *pure*, and *spiritual*, can never agree with the vitiated Palate of a *base* and *degenerous* Soul. For what Concord can there be between a *spiteful* and *devilish* Spirit, and the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodness?* between a *sensual* and *carnalized* one, that understands no other Pleasures but only those of the Flesh, and those *Pure* and *Virgin*-Spirits that neither *eat* nor *drink*, but live for ever upon *Wisdom*, and *Holiness*, and *Love*, and *Contemplation?* Certainly, till our Mind is *contempered* to the Heavenly State, and we are of the same *disposition* with God, and Angels, and Saints, there is no Pleasure in Heaven that can be agreeable to us. For, as for the *main*, we shall be of the same *Temper* and *Disposition* when we come into the other World, as we are when we leave *this*; it being unimaginable how a *Total Change* should be wrought in *us* meerly by passing out of *one* World into *another*. And therefore as in *this* World it is *Likeness* that does *congregate* and *associate* Beings together; so, doubtless, it is in the *other* too. So that if we carry with us *thither* our *wicked* and *devilish*

deviliſh Diſpoſitions, (as we ſhall doubtleſs do, unleſs we *ſubdue* and *mortifie* them here) there will be no Company fit for us to aſſociate with, but only the *deviliſh* and *damned* Ghoſts of wicked Men, with whom our wretched Spirits being already joined, by a Likeneſs of Nature, will mingle themſelves, as ſoon as ever they are excommunicated from the Society of Mortals. For whither ſhould they flock, but to the Birds of their own Feather? With whom ſhould they aſſociate, but with thoſe *malignant* Spirits to whom they are already joined by a Community of Nature? So that ſuppoſing that when they land in Eternity, it were left to their own liberty to go to *Heaven* or *Hell*, into the Society of the *Bleſſed* or the *Damned*; it is plain that Heaven would be no Place for them, that the Air of the *bright Region* of *Eternal Day* would never agree with their *black* and *helliſh* Natures. For, alas! what ſhould they do among thoſe *Bleſſed Beings* that inhabit it, to whoſe God-like Natures, Divine Contemplations, and Heavenly Employments, they have ſo great a *Repugnancy* and *Averſation?* So that beſides the having a *Right* to Heaven, it is neceſſary to our enjoying it, that we ſhould be antecedently *diſpoſed* and *qualified* for it. And it being thus, God hath been graciouſly pleaſed to make thoſe very Vertues the *Conditions* of our *Right* to *Heaven*, which are the proper *Diſpoſitions* and *Qualifications* of our Spirits for it; that ſo with one and the ſame Labour we might *entitle* our ſelves to, and *qualifie* our ſelves to enjoy it.

Now (as we ſhewed you before) the *Condition* of our *Right* to Heaven, is our *practiſing*

thoſe Heavenly Vertues which are implied in the Religion of the *End*; and as the Religion of the *Means* no further *entitles* us to Heaven, than as it produces and promotes in us thoſe Heavenly Vertues, ſo it no further *qualifies* us for it. For when the Soul goes into Eternity, it leaves the Religion of the *Means* behind it, and carries nothing with it but only thoſe Heavenly *Vertues* and *Diſpoſitions* which it here acquired by thoſe *Means*. For as for *Faith* and *Conſideration*, *Hearing* of God's *Word*, and *Receiving* of *Sacraments*, &c. they are all but Scaffolds to that Heavenly Building of inward *Purity* and *Goodneſs*; and when this is once finiſhed for Eternity, then muſt thoſe Scaffolds all go down, as things of no further Uſe or Neceſſity. But as for the *Graces* of the *Mind*, they are to ſtand for ever, to be the Receptacles and Habitations of all Heavenly Pleaſure. And hence the Apoſtle tells us, that of thoſe three Chriſtian Graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, *Charity* (which, in the largeſt ſence of it, comprehends all Heavenly Vertue) is the greateſt; becauſe the two former, being but *Means* of *Charity*, ſhall ceaſe in Heaven, and be ſwallowed up for ever in *Viſion* and *Enjoyment*; but *Charity*, ſaith he, *never faileth*, 1 Cor. xii. 13.

By all which, it is apparent, that the Religion of the *Means* is no further uſeful to us, than as it is apt to produce and promote in us thoſe Heavenly Vertues, the Practice of which is the moſt *direct* and *immediate* Means to the ultimate *End* of a Chriſtian. Wherefore, as a Man may *knock* and *file*, and yet be no *Mechanick*, though the *Hammer* and *File* with which he does it are very uſeful Tools

Tools to the making of any curious *Machine*; so a Man may *Pray*, and *Hear*, and *Receive Sacraments*, &c. and yet be a very Bungler in the blessed Trade of a Heavenly Life. For though it is true, these are excellent *Means* of Heavenly Living, yet as the Art of the *Mechanick* consists not in *using* his Tools, but in using them in such *a manner* as is necessary to the perfecting and accomplishing his Work; So the Art of one that pretends to the Heavenly Life, consists not barely in *praying* and *hearing*, &c. but in using those *Means* with that Religious *Skill* and *Artifice* which is necessary to render them effectually subservient to the *Ends* of *Piety* and *Vertue*.

And thus I have given a general Account of the *Means* which are necessary to our obtaining of Heaven, and which (as I have shewed) are either such as tend more *directly* and *immediately* to it, or such as more *remotely* respect it. The first is, the Practice of those *Heavenly Vertues* in the Perfection whereof the Happiness of Heaven consists; the second is, the Practising of those *Duties* which are necessary to our acquiring and perfecting those *Heavenly Vertues*. And of these two Parts consists the whole *Christian Life*; which takes in not only all those *Vertues* that are to be practised by us in Heaven, but also all those *Duties* by which we are to overcome the Difficulty of those Vertues, and to acquire and perfect them. The first of these, for Distinction sake, we will call the *Heavenly Part of the Christian Life*; it being that part of it which we shall lead in *Heaven*, after we have learn'd it here upon *Earth*; The second I shall call the *Warfaring*, or *Militant Part of the Christian*

Life, which is peculiar to our *Earthly State*, wherein we are to contend and ſtrive with the manifold Difficulties which attend us in the Exerciſe of thoſe *Heavenly Vertues*. Both which, I conceive, are implied in thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* i. 27. *Only let your Converſation be as becometh the Goſpel:* where the Greek word Πολιτεύεσθε, which we render, *Let your Converſation be*, ſtrictly ſignifies, *behaving our ſelves as Citizens*; or which, if we may have leave to coin a word, may be fitly render'd, *Citizen it as becometh the Goſpel.* For the word implies, that thoſe of whom he ſpeaks, were *Denizens* of ſome *Free City*; for ſo the word πολίτευμα, which, *Phil.* iii. 20. is render'd *Converſation*, ſtrictly denotes a *Citizenſhip*, from πολίται, *Citizens*; and is of the ſame import with πολιτεία, which, *Acts* xxii. 28. is tranſlated a *Freedom*, *i. e.* of the City of *Rome*; which denotes the State and Condition of thoſe, who, though they dwelt *out* of that City, and ſometimes *remote* from it, had yet the *Jus Civitatis Romanæ*, the *Privileges* of it belonging to them. For thus *Cicero* deſcribes it, *Omnibus Municipibus duas eſſe Patrias, unam Naturæ, alteram Juris, Catonis Exemplo, qui Tuſculi natus, in Populi Romani Societatem ſuſceptus eſt: i. e.* "All ſuch as are made Free of the City have "two Countries, one of Nature, the other of "Law; as *Cato*, for inſtance, who was born at "*Tuſculum*, and afterwards admitted a Citizen "of *Rome*." Which exactly agrees with the Nature of this Heavenly πολίτευμα, or *Citizenſhip*, which the Apoſtle here attributes to *Chriſtians*, who, though they belong at preſent to *another Country*, and live a great way off from the *Heavenly*

Heavenly City, have as yet no *Domicilium in Urbe*, no actual Poſſeſſion of any of its bleſſed Manſions; are notwithſtanding *Free Denizens* of it, and have, by Covenant, a Right to all thoſe bleſſed *Privileges* which its Inhabitants do actually enjoy. From whence it is evident, that the πολιτεύεσθε in that Text, refers to their being *Citizens* of Heaven, and as *ſuch* it earneſtly exhorts them to behave themſelves; to live as thoſe who being now in a remote Country, are yet συμπολῖται ἁγίων, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Eph.* ii. 19. *i. e. Fellow-Citizens with the Saints above*; that are *connaturalized* with them into that Heavenly *Commonwealth*. And being thus underſtood, the Apoſtle's Advice will comprehend in it *both* thoſe kinds of *Means* which I have before deſcribed. For, to live as *Citizens* of Heaven, is, Firſt, To live like thoſe who are the *Inhabitants* of Heaven, to imitate their bleſſed *Manners* and *Behaviour*, in doing the Will of God upon *Earth*, as it is done by them in *Heaven*; and this takes in the *Practice* of all thoſe *Heavenly Vertues* of which the Religion of the *End* conſiſts: Secondly, To live like thoſe that have a πολίτευμα or *Citizenſhip* in Heaven, that are *intituled* by Covenant to the *Privileges* and *Immunities* of it, but are as yet to win its *Poſſeſſion* by a continual *Warfare* and *Contention* with thoſe manifold Difficulties and Oppoſitions which lie in our way to it: and this takes in the *Practice* of all thoſe *Duties* in which the Religion of the *Means* conſiſts. To live *like Chriſtians* therefore, or, *as becomes the Goſpel*, is to live in the continual Uſe of both kinds of the *Means* of Happineſs. So that the *Chriſtian Converſation* conſiſting of theſe

Two, is the only *full* and *adequate* Means by which *Heaven* can be obtained.

But that I may make this more fully appear, I ſhall conſider theſe *two* parts of it *diſtinctly*, and endeavour to ſhew how effectually each of them doth contribute in its kind, to our obtaining the Happineſs of Heaven. And, firſt, I ſhall begin with the *Proximate Means*, viz. The *Practice* of all thoſe *Heavenly Vertues* which are implied in the Religion of the *End*, and do make the *Heavenly Part of the Chriſtian Life*.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the Heavenly Part *of the* Chriſtian Life, *which is the* Proximate Means *of obtaining Heaven; ſhewing, what* Vertues *it conſiſts of, and how much every* Vertue *contributes to the Happineſs of* Heaven.

Vertue in the general, conſiſts in a *ſuitable Behaviour* to the *State* and *Capacities* in which we are placed. Now *Man*, who is the Subject of that *Vertue* we are here diſcourſing of, is to be conſidered under a Three-fold *Capacity*. The

Firſt, is, Of a *Rational Animal*: The

Second, Of a Rational Animal related to *God*: The

Third,

Third, Of a Rational Animal related to all *other Creatures.*

And theſe are the only Capacities of Vertue that are in Humane Nature: So that all the Vertues we are obliged to, and capable of, conſiſt in behaving our ſelves ſuitable to the State and Condition of *Rational Animals*, that are related to *God* and their *Fellow-Creatures.*

By which three Capacities of our Nature, the Vertue or *Suitableneſs* of *Behaviour* which we ſtand obliged to, is diſtinguiſhed into three kinds, *viz.*

The *Humane*,
The *Divine*, and
The *Social.*

Humane Vertue conſiſts in behaving our ſelves ſuitably to the State and Capacity of meer *Rational Animals.*

Divine Vertue conſiſts in behaving our ſelves ſuitably to the Condition of Rational Animals related to *God.*

Social Vertue conſiſts in behaving our ſelves ſuitably to the Capacity of Rational Animals related to their *Fellow-Creatures*, but eſpecially to *Rational Creatures* that are of the ſame Claſs and Society with us.

That I may therefore proceed more diſtinctly in this Argument, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew what thoſe *Vertues* of the *Chriſtian Life* are, which are proper to a Man in each of thoſe *Capacities*; and how much each of thoſe *Virtues* contributes to the *Happineſs* of *Heaven.*

SECT.

SECT. I.

Concerning thoſe Humane Vertues *which belong to a* Man *as he is a* Reaſonable Animal, *ſhewing that they are all included in the* Heavenly Part *of the* Chriſtian Life, *and that the Practice of them effectually conduces to our future Happineſs.*

Firſt, We will conſider *Man* in the Capacity of a meer *Rational Animal*, that is compounded of contrary Principles, *viz. Spirit* and *Matter*, or a *Rational Soul* and *Humane Body*; by which Compoſition he is, as it were, the Buckle of both Worlds, in whom the *Spiritual* and *Material* World are *claſped* and united together; and partaking, as he does, of both Extremes, of *Spirit* and of *Matter*, of *Angel* and *Brute*, there ariſe within him, from thoſe contrary Natures, contrary Propenſions, *viz. Rational* and *Senſual*, or *Angelical* and *Brutiſh*; And in the due Subordination of theſe, his *Senſual* to his *Rational* Propenſions, conſiſts all Humane Vertue.

For his *Reaſon* being the nobleſt Principle of his Nature, muſt be ſuppoſed to be implanted in him by God, to *rule* and *govern* him, to be an *Eye* to his blind and brutiſh Affections, to *correct* the Errors of his Imagination, to *bound* the Extravagancies of his Appetites, and regulate the whole Courſe of his Actions, ſo as that he may do nothing that is deſtructive or injurious to this excellent Frame and Structure of his Nature. But now in this compounded Nature of *Man*, there are his *Concupiſcible* and *Iraſcible Affections*: with the firſt

firſt of which he deſires and purſues his *Pleaſures*, and with the ſecond he ſhuns and avoids his *Dangers*; and there are alſo *Bodily Appetites*, ſuch as Hunger, Thirſt, and Carnal Concupiſcence; and, together with theſe, a *Self-Eſteem* and *Valuation*; all which are the natural Subjects of his Reaſon, and indeed the only Subjects upon which it is to exerciſe its Dominion. So that in the well and ill Government of *theſe*, conſiſts all *Humane Vertue* and *Vice*. To the perfect well governing therefore of a Man's ſelf, there are Five things indiſpenſibly neceſſary.

1. That he ſhould impartially conſult his *Reaſon* what is abſolutely beſt for him, and by what means it is beſt attainable, and then *conſtantly* purſue what it propoſes and directs him to. For ſo far as he is wanting in this, he caſts off the Government of his *Reaſon*.

2. That he ſhould proportion his *Concupiſcible* Affections to the juſt value which his *Reaſon* ſets upon thoſe things which he *affects*: For every Degree of Affection which exceeds the merit of Things, is *irrational*, and conſequently injurious to our *Rational Nature*.

3. That he ſhould not ſuffer his *Iraſcible* Affections to exceed thoſe Evils and Dangers which he would avoid: For if he doth, *they* will prove greater Evils to him, than *thoſe* Evils or Dangers are which raiſe and provoke them.

4. That he ſhould not indulge his *Bodily Appetite* to the Hurt and Prejudice of his *Rational Nature*: For if he does, he will violate the *nobler*, for the ſake of the *viler* Part of himſelf. And,

5. That

5. That upon the whole, he should maintain a *Modest Opinion* of himself; and not think better of his own *Conduct* and *Management* of himself than it deserves: For by so doing, he will be apt to over-look his own *Misgovernments*, and so incapacitate himself for any farther *Improvements*. And in these five Particulars consists all that Vertue which belongs to a Man, considered meerly in the Capacity of a *Rational Animal*:

The First is the Vertue of *Prudence*,
The Second is the Vertue of *Moderation*,
The Third is the Vertue of *Fortitude*,
The Fourth is the Vertue of *Temperance*,
The Fifth is the Vertue of *Humility*.

All which, as I shall shew, are Essential Parts of the *Christian Life*, and such as do effectually contribute to our *Heavenly Happiness*.

I. *Prudence*. And this is the *Root* and *Groundwork* of all other Vertues; 'Tis this that gives *Law* and *Scope* to all our Motions, that proposes the *Ends*, and prescribes the *Measures* of our Actions. For *Prudence* consists in being guided and directed by *Right Reason*, as it proposes to us the worthiest *Ends*, and directs us to the fittest and most effectual *Means* of obtaining them. So that to live *prudently*, is to live in the constant *Exercise* of our *Reason*, and to be continually pursuing such *Ends* as *Right Reason* proposes, by such *Means* as *Right Reason* directs us to, which is the proper Business of all the Vertues of Religion. And hence *Religion*, in the Scripture, is frequently called by the Name of *Wisdom* or *Prudence*; *The Fear of the Lord that is Wisdom*, saith *Job*, *and to depart*

depart from Evil, that is Underſtanding, Job xxviii. 28. And, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. cxi. 10. where *the Fear of the Lord* comprehends all the *Acts* of *Religion*; which are therefore *wiſe* and *prudent*, becauſe they are the fitteſt *Means* to thoſe worthieſt *Ends* which *Right Reaſon* propoſes. So that to exerciſe our Reaſon in the *Search* and *Diſcovery* of what is abſolutely beſt for us, and to follow our Reaſon in the *Purſuit* and *Acqueſt* of what it diſcovers to be ſo, is that Vertue of *Prudence* whereunto we ſtand obliged as we are *Rational Animals*.

For our Reaſon being the *nobleſt* Principle of our Nature, *that* by which we are raiſed above the Level of *Brutes*, yea, by which we are allied to *Angels*, and do border upon *God Himſelf*, ought upon that account to be ſubmitted to, as the ſupreme *Regent* and *Directreſs* of all our other Powers, and to be looked upon as the *Rule* of our *Will*, and the *Guide* of all our *Animal Motions*. And when, to gratifie our *ſenſual* Appetites, or *unreaſonable Paſſions*, we either neglect thoſe *Ends* which our Reaſon propoſes to us, or *purſue* them by ſuch *Means* as our Reaſon diſallows of, we reverſe the very Order of our Natures, and tread *Antipodes* to our ſelves; and while we do ſo, it is impoſſible we ſhould be happy, either *here*, or *hereafter*. For every thing, you ſee, is diſeaſed while it is in an *unnatural* State and Condition, while its Parts are *diſplaced*, or put into a *Diſorder*, or *diſtorted* into an unnatural Figure. And ſo it is with a Man, who while he preſerves his Faculties in their natural *Station* and *Subordination* to each other, while

while he keeps his *Affections* and *Appetites* in ſubjection to his *Will*, and his *Will* to his *Reaſon*, he is *calm* and *quiet*, and enjoys within himſelf perpetual *Eaſe* and *Tranquility*: But when once he *breaks* this Order, and ſuffers his Paſſions or his Appetites to *uſurp* the Place of his Reaſon; to *impoſe* contrary *Ends* to it, or preſcribe contrary *Means*; his Faculties, like *diſ-jointed* Members, are in perpetual *Anguiſh* and *Anxiety*. And hence it is, that in the Courſe of a wicked Life, we feel ſuch reſtleſs Contentions between our *Spirit* and *Fleſh*, between the *Law in our Minds*, and the *Law in our Members*; becauſe our Nature is out of *Tune*, and its Faculties are *diſplaced* and *diſordered*, and that ſovereign Principle of *Reaſon* which ſhould *ſway* and *govern* us, is depoſed, and made a *Vaſſal* to our *Appetites* and *Paſſions*. For in all our evil Courſes we *chuſe* and *refuſe*, *reſolve* and *Act*, not as *Reaſon* directs us, but as *Senſe* and *Paſſion* biaſſes us; and our Reaſon having nothing to do in all this *Brutiſh Scene* of Action, either ſleeps it out, without minding or regarding, or elſe ſits by as an idle Spectator of it, and only *cenſures* and *condemns* it. And it is this that cauſes all that *Tumult* and *Conteſt* that is in our Natures; and till, by the Exerciſe of *Prudence*, our Faculties are reduced, and ſet in order again, our *Mind* will be like our *Body*, while its Bones are out of Joint, continually *reſtleſs* and *unquiet*. And therefore to remove this great Indiſpoſition of our Nature to Happineſs, *Prudence* is required of us, as one of the principal *Vertues* of the *Heavenly Part* of the *Chriſtian Life*.

For

For thus our Saviour enjoins, that we ſhould be *wiſe as Serpents*, as well as *harmleſs as Doves*, Mat. x. 16. which though it be here preſcribed in a *particular* Caſe only, *viz.* that of *Perſecution*; yet ſince the Reaſon of it extends to *all other* Caſes, and it is fit we ſhould be Prudent in *all* our Undertakings, as well as in *ſuffering Perſecution*, it is upon that account equivalent to an Univerſal Command. So alſo, *Epheſ.* v. 15. *See that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe*; i. e. In the whole Courſe of your Actions take heed that ye follow the Guidance of your *Reaſon*, and do not ſuffer your ſelves to be ſeduced by your blind *Paſſions* and *Appetites*, which are meer *Ignes fatui*, or the *Guides* of *Fools*. And accordingly the Apoſtle prays for his Chriſtian *Coloſſians*, *That they might be filled with the Knowledge of God in all Wiſdom and ſpiritual Underſtanding*, Col. i. 9. *i. e.* That they might have ſuch a knowledge of God's Will as might render them truly *prudent*, and cauſe them to purſue the beſt *Ends* by the beſt *Means*. And though this Vertue ſeldom occurs in the New Teſtament, under its own Name; yet, as in the above-named Places it is expreſſed by *Wiſdom*, ſo it is elſewhere by *Knowledge*, as particularly, 2 *Cor.* vi. 6. where he commands the Miniſters of the Church to approve themſelves ſuch by ſeveral Vertues, and particularly by *Pureneſs*, i. e. *Continence*; and by *Knowledge*, i. e. by *Prudence*: For, beſides that *Knowledge* as it ſignifies an *Underſtanding of Divine Things*, was not a *Vertue* in the Apoſtles, but a *Gift* of God, and ſo not proper to be enumerated amongſt theſe *Vertues*; there is hardly any Account can be given why the Apoſtle ſhould

ſhould place *Knowledge* in the midſt of ſo many *Moral Vertues*, if he did not thereby mean the *Vertue* of *Prudence*, which is, as it were, the *Eye* and *Guide* of all the other *Vertues*. So again, 2 *Pet.* i. 6. where he bids us add to *Faith*, *Vertue*, i. e. Fortitude, or Conſtancy of Mind; *and to Vertue*, *Knowledge*; *and to Knowledge*, *Temperance*: By *Knowledge*, it is highly probable he means *Prudence*, becauſe he places it in the midſt of thoſe *two Vertues* which border neareſt upon *Prudence*.

Now that the Practice of *this Vertue* is a moſt proper and effectual *Means* of our *Everlaſting Happineſs*, is evident from hence; Becauſe the Practice of it is a conſtant Exerciſe of *Reaſon*. For to act *prudently* in Religion, is to follow the *beſt* Reaſon; to aim at *Heaven*, which is the *beſt* End, and direct our Actions thither by the *beſt* Rules: 'Tis to conſult what is beſt for our ſelves, and how it may be moſt *effectually* obtained. In a word, it is to *intend* the *chiefeſt Good* above All, and to *level* our Lives and Actions moſt *directly* towards it. This is *Religious Prudence* in the *general*; and as for thoſe *particulars* of it, which we are obliged to exerciſe in the ſeveral *States*, *Relations*, and *Circumſtances* wherein we are placed, they all conſiſt in doing what is moſt *fit* and *reaſonable* with reſpect to that Great and Bleſſed End.

For by living in the continual Practice of *Religious Prudence*, we ſhall by degrees habituate our ſelves to a Life of *Reaſon*, and ſhake off that drouſie Charm of *Senſe* and *Paſſion* which hangs upon our Minds, and renders our Faculties ſo *dull* and *unactive*: And having diſuſed our ſelves a while to obey their *blind* and *imperious* Dictates, our Reaſon

ſon will reaſſume its Throne in us, and direct all our Aims and Endeavours to what is *fitteſt* and moſt *reaſonable*. For we being finite and limited Beings, cannot operate *divers* ways with *equal* vigour *at once*; and our rational and ſenſitive Propenſions are made in ſuch a regular and *æquilibrious* order, that proportionably as the one does *encreaſe* in Activity, the others always *decay*; and ſo accordingly as we abate in the ſtrength of our *Brutiſh*, we ſhall *improve* in the vigour of our *Rational* Faculties. But to act ſuitably to their Natures, being the End of all our *Faculties* and *Powers of Action*, the God of Nature to excite them thereto, has founded all their *Pleaſure* in the *vigorous* Exerciſe of them upon ſuitable Objects. Since therefore our *Reaſon* is the beſt and nobleſt of all *Powers of Action*, to be ſure the greateſt *Pleaſure* we are capable of, muſt ſpring out of the Exerciſe of our *Reaſon*. Wherefore ſince *Prudence* conſiſts in the *Uſe* of our *Reaſon*, the Practice thereof muſt needs effectually contribute to our *Pleaſure* and *Happineſs*. For *Uſe* and *Exerciſe* will mightily *ſtrengthen* and *improve* our Reaſon, and render it not only more *apprehenſive* of what is fit and reaſonable; but alſo more *perſuaſive* and *prevalent*; and when once it it is improved into a *prevailing Principle* of Action and hath acquired not only *Skill* enough to *preſcribe* what is Right to us, but alſo *Power* enough to *perſuade* us to comply with its Preſcriptions; to *chuſe* and *refuſe*, to *love* and *hate*, to *hope* and *fear*, *deſire* and *delight*, and regulate all our Actions by its Laws and Dictates, then are we entring upon our *Heaven* and *Happineſs*.

For that which makes us *unhappy*, is, that our ſinful and unreaſonable Affections do ſo *hamper* and *intangle* us, that we cannot *freely* exerciſe our Faculties upon ſuch Objects as are moſt ſuitable to them; that our Minds and Wills are ſo *fettered* by our vicious Inclinations, that we cannot exert them upon that which is moſt worthy to be *Known* and *Choſen*, without a great deal of *Difficulty* and *Diſtraction*. But now under the Conduct of our *Reaſon*, our Faculties will by Degrees recover their *Freedom*, and diſengage themſelves from thoſe vicious *Encumbrances* which do ſo *clog* and *interrupt* them in their Rational Motions. And when this is throughly effected, we are in full Poſſeſſion of the *Heavenly State*, which (as I have ſhewed) conſiſts in the *free* and *vigorous* Exerciſe of our Rational Faculties upon the *beſt* and *worthieſt* Objects. For when once our *Paſſions* and *Appetites* are perfectly ſubdued to our *Reaſon*, all our Rational Faculties will be *free*, and every one will move towards its proper Object, without any *lett* or *hindrance*; our *Underſtanding* will be ſwallow'd up in a fix'd Contemplation of the *ſublimeſt Truths*; our *Wills* entirely reſigned to the Choice and Embraces of the *trueſt Good*; our *Affections* unalterably devoted to the Love and Fruition of the moſt *excellent Beauty and Perfection*; and in this conſiſts the happy State of *Heaven*: So that to live *prudently*, or, which is the ſame, to govern our ſelves by our *beſt Reaſon*, is both a *neceſſary* and *effectual* Means of attaining to the *Heavenly State*.

II. Another Vertue which appertains to a Man, conſidered meerly as a *Rational Animal*, is *Modera-*

Moderation, ; which conſiſts in proportioning our *concupiſcible* Affections to the juſt worth and value of Things ; ſo as neither to ſpend our Affections *too prodigally* upon Trifles, nor yet be *over-ſparing* or *niggardly* of them to real and ſubſtantial Goods. But to *love*, *deſire* and *expect* things more or leſs, according to the Eſtimate which our beſt and moſt impartial *Reaſon* makes of their Worth and Goodneſs. For he that affects things more than in the Eſteem of Reaſon they deſerve, affects them *irrationally*, and regulates his Paſſion by his *wild* and *extravagant* Imagination, and not by his *Reaſon* and *Judgment*. And while Men do thus neglect their *Reaſon*, and accuſtom themſelves to *deſire*, and *love*, and *affect* without it, they neceſſarily diſable themſelves to enjoy a *Rational Happineſs*. For, beſides that their Rational Faculties being thus *laid by*, and *unemployed*, will naturally contract *Ruſt*, and grow every day more *weak* and *reſtive* ; Beſides, that their *unexerciſed* Reaſon will *melt away* in Sloth and Idleneſs, and all its vital Powers *freeze* for want of motion, and, like ſtanding Water, *ſtagnate* and gather mire, and by degrees *corrupt* and *putrefie*, till at laſt it will be impoſſible to revive them to the *vigorous Exerciſe* and *Motion* wherein their Pleaſure and Happineſs conſiſts ; Beſides this, I ſay, by habituating our ſelves to affect things *irrationally*, *i. e.* to love the *leaſt* Goods *moſt*, and the *greateſt leaſt* ; we ſhall diſable our ſelves from enjoying *any* Goods, but only ſuch as cannot make us happy. For he that loves any Good more than it is worth, can never be happy in the enjoyment of it ; becauſe he *thinks* there is more in it than he *finds*, and ſo is always

diſappointed in the *Fruition* of it. And the *grief* of being diſappointed of what he *expects*, does commonly countervail the *Pleaſure* of what he *finds* and *enjoys*. While he is in the *purſuit* of any Good which he *inordinately* dotes upon, he is *wild* and *imaginative*; he ſwells with *Phantaſtick* Joys, and juggles himſelf into *Expectations*, that are as large and boundleſs as his *Deſires*: But when once he is *ſeized* of it, and finds how vaſtly the *Enjoyment* falls ſhort of his *Expectation*, his *Pleaſure* is preſently loſt in his *Diſappointment*, and ſo he remains as unſatisfied as ever. And thus if he were to ſpend an Eternity in ſuch *Purſuits* and *Enjoyments*, his Life would be nothing but an Everlaſting Succeſſion of *Expectations* and *Diſappointments*. So that all *inordinate* Affection deſtroys its own *Satisfaction*, and neceſſarily renders us by ſo many Degrees miſerable, as it exceeds the real Worth and Value of Things.

Beſides which, alſo, it is to be conſidered, that all theſe *leſſer* Goods which are the Objects of our *Extravagant Affections*, are things which we muſt e're long be for ever *deprived* of: For the *leſſer* Goods are thoſe, which are only good for the *worſer* part of us, that is, for our *Body* and *Animal Life*; the proper Goods whereof are the *Outward*, *Senſitive* Enjoyments of this World; All which, when we leave this World, we muſt leave *for ever*, and go away into Eternity, with nothing about us, but only the Good or Bad *Diſpoſitions* of our Souls. So that if our Soul be *carnaliz*'d through our *immoderate Affection* to the things of this World, we ſhall carry that *Affection* with us, but leave the things which we thus vehe-

vehemently *affect* behind us for ever. For that which is the *prevailing Temper* of Souls in this Life, will doubtleſs be ſo in the other too; ſo far is that of the Poet true,

——— *Quæ gratia currûm*
Armorúmque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Paſcere equos, eadem ſequitur tellure repôſtos.

For though the coming into the other World, will queſtionleſs *improve* thoſe Souls which are *really good* before, yet it is not to be imagined how it ſhould *create* thoſe *good*, who are *habitually bad*; and if we *retain* in the *other* World that *prevailing Affection* to theſe ſenſitive Goods which we *contracted* in *this*, it muſt neceſſarily render us unſpeakably *miſerable* there. For every *Luſt* the Soul carries into the other World, will, by being eternally ſeparated from its *Pleaſures*, convert into an *Hopeleſs Deſire*, and upon that account grow more *furious* and *impatient*. For of all the Torments of the Mind, I know none that is comparable to that of an outragious *Deſire* joined with *Deſpair* of Satisfaction; which is juſt the caſe of Senſual and Worldly-minded Souls in the other Life, where they are full of *ſharp* and *unrebated* Deſires, and, like ſtarving Men, that are ſhut up between two dead Walls, are tormented with a *fierce* but *hopeleſs* Hunger, which, having nothing elſe to feed on, preys and quarries on *themſelves*; and in this deſolate Condition they are forced to wander to and fro, tormented with a Reſtleſs *Rage*, an Hungry and Unſatisfied *Deſire*, craving Food, but neither *finding* nor *expecting* any; and ſo in unexpreſſible

Anguiſh they pine away a long Eternity. And though they might find Content and Satisfaction, could they but *divert* their Affections another way, and reconcile them to the Heavenly Enjoyments; yet being irrecoverably pre-engaged to ſenſual *Goods*, they have no ſavour or reliſh of any thing elſe, but are like *Feveriſh Tongues* that diſguſt and nauſeate the moſt grateful Liquors, by reaſon of their own *overflowing Gall.* So impoſſible is it for Men to be happy, either here or hereafter, ſo long as their Affections to the leſſer Goods of this World do ſo immoderately exceed the worth and value of them.

One Eſſential Part therefore of the *Chriſtian Life*, which is the Great *Means* of our Happineſs, is the Vertue of *Moderation*; the peculiar Office whereof is to bound our *Concupiſcible* Affections, and proportion them to the Intrinſick Worth of thoſe outward Goods which we *affect* and *deſire*. For though the word *Moderation*, according to our preſent acceptation of it, be no where to be found in the New Teſtament, yet the Vertue expreſſed by it is, frequently enjoined; as particularly where we are forbid to *ſet our Affections upon the Things of the Earth*, Col. iii. 2. *To love the World, or the Things that are in the World*, 1 Joh. ii. 15. Which Phraſes are not to be ſo underſtood, as if we were not to love the Enjoyments of the World *at all*; for they are the Bleſſings of God, and ſuch as he has propoſed to us in his Promiſes, as the *Rewards* and *Encouragements* of our Obedience; and to be ſure, he would never encourage us to obey him by the Hope of ſuch Rewards as are *unlawful* for us to deſire and love: The meaning therefore of

of theſe Prohibitions, is, that we ſhould ſo *moderate* our Affections to the World, as not to permit them to exceed the Real Worth and Value of its Enjoyments. For it is not *ſimply* our loving it, but our loving it to *ſuch a degree* as is inconſiſtent with our Love of God, that is here forbidden; For *he that loveth the World* (ſaith St. *John*) *the love of the Father is not in him*; *i. e.* he that loves it to ſuch a degree as to *preferr* the Riches, Honours and Pleaſures of it, *before God*, and his *Duty* to him, hath no real Love to God, *i. e.* he loves not God *as God*, as the Chiefeſt Good, and Supreme Beauty and Perfection. And hence *Covetouſneſs*, which is an immoderate Deſire of the World, is call'd *Idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. becauſe it ſets the World in the place of God, and gives it that ſupreme Degree of Affection which is only due to Him; and this the Apoſtle there calls *Inordinate Affection*, becauſe it extravagantly exceeds the Intrinſick Worth and Value of its Objects. Wherefore we are ſtrictly enjoined *to take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs*, Luk. xii. 15. And to *let our Converſation be without Covetouſneſs*, Heb. xiii. 5. By all which, and ſundry other Commands and Prohibitions of the Goſpel, the *Moderation* of our *Concupiſcible* Affections is made a neceſſary part of the *Chriſtian Life*.

Now that this alſo mightily contributes to our acquiſition of the *Heavenly Happineſs*, is evident, not only from what hath been already ſaid, but alſo from hence, that till our Affections are thus *moderated*, we can have no Savour or Reliſh of the *Heavenly Enjoyments*. For in this corrupt State of our Nature, we generally *underſtand* by

our *Affections*, which, like *coloured Glaſs*, repreſent all Objects to us in their own *Hue* and *Complexion*. When therefore a Man's *Affections* are immoderately carried out towards worldly things, they will be ſure by degrees to corrupt and deprave his *Judgment*, and render him as unfit to judge of Divine and Spiritual Enjoyments, as a *Plow-man* is to be a *Moderator* in the *Schools*. For when a Man's Thoughts have been employed another way, and the Delights of *Senſe* have for a long while preoccupied his *Underſtanding*, he will judge things to be *Good* or *Evil*, according as they *diſguſt* or *gratifie* his lower Appetites: And this being the Standard by which he meaſures things, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould have any Savour of thoſe *Spiritual Goods* in which the Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts. For though in his Nature there is a Tendency to *Rational Pleaſures*, yet this he may, and very frequently does, ſtifle and extinguiſh, by addicting himſelf wholly to the Delights and Gratifications of his *Senſe*, which by degrees will ſo melt down his *Rational* Inclinations into his *Senſual*, and confound and mingle them with his *Carnal Appetites*, that his *Soul* will wholly ſympathize with his *Body*, and have all *Likes* and *Diſlikes* in common with it; And there is nothing will be capable of pleaſing the *one*, but what does gratifie the unbounded Liquoriſhneſs of the *other*.

Now to ſuch a Soul the Spiritual World muſt needs be a *barren Wilderneſs*, where no Good grows that it can live upon, none but what is nauſeous and diſtaſtful to its *coarſe* and *vitiated* Palate; where there are noble Entertainments indeed for Minds

Minds that are *contempered* to them, that have already taſted and experienced them, but not one drop of Water to cool the Tip of a *Senſual* Tongue, or gratifie the Thirſt of a *Carnal Deſire*. So that were we admitted to that Heavenly Place where the Bleſſed dwell, yet unleſs we had acquired their Heavenly *Diſpoſition* and *Temper*, we could never participate with them in their Pleaſures. For ſo great would be the Antipathy of our ſenſual Affections to them, that we ſhould doubtleſs fly away from them, and rather chuſe to be for ever *Inſenſible*, than be condemned to an everlaſting *Perception* of what is ſo *ungrateful* to our Natures. So that till we have in ſome meaſure moderated our *Concupiſcible Affections*, and weaned them from their exceſſive Dotages upon *ſenſual Good*, it is impoſſible we ſhould enjoy the Happineſs of Heaven: For ſuch perfect Oppoſites are a *Spiritual* Heaven and a *Carnal* Mind, that unleſs This be *Spiritualized*, or That be *Carnalized*, it is impoſſible they ſhould ever meet and agree.

III. Another Vertue that belongs to a Man, conſidered meerly as a *Rational Animal*, is *Fortitude*; which, in the largeſt ſence, conſiſts in not permitting our *Iraſcible Affections* to exceed thoſe Evils or Dangers which we ſeek to repel or avoid; in keeping our *Fear* and *Anger*, our *Malice*, *Envy* and *Revenge* in ſuch due ſubjection, as not to let them exceed thoſe Bounds which Reaſon, and the Nature of Things, preſcribe them. For I do not take *Fortitude* here in the narrow ſence of the *Moraliſts*, as it is a *Medium* between *Irrational Fear* and *Fool-Hardineſs*; but as it is the Rule

Rule by which all thoſe *Iraſcible* Paſſions in us, which ariſe from the ſenſe of any Evil or Danger, ought to be guided and directed; That by which we are to guard and defend our ſelves againſt all thoſe *troubleſome* and *diſquieting* Impreſſions which outward Evils and Dangers are apt to make upon our Minds. And in this Latitude, *Fortitude* comprehends not only *Courage*, as it is oppoſed to *Fear*; but alſo *Gentleneſs*, as it is oppoſed to *Fierceneſs*; *Sufferance*, as it is oppoſed to *Impatience*; *Contentedneſs*, as it is oppoſed to *Envy*; and *Meekneſs*, as it is oppoſed to *Malice* and *Revenge*; All which are the Paſſions of *weak* and *puſillanimous* Minds, that are not able to withſtand an Evil, nor endure the leaſt Touch of it, without being *ſtartled* and *diſordered*; that are ſo ſoftned with Baſeneſs and Cowardice, that they cannot reſiſt the moſt gentle Impreſſions of Injury. For as ſick Perſons are offended with the Light of the Sun, and the freſhneſs of the Air, which are highly *pleaſant* and *delightful* to ſuch as are well and in health; Even ſo Perſons of weak and feeble Minds are eaſily offended, their Spirits are ſo tender and effeminate, that they cannot endure the leaſt Air of Evil ſhould blow upon them; and what would be only a *Diverſion* to a Couragious Soul, *troubles* and *incommodes* Them. And whatſoever Courage ſuch Perſons may pretend to, it's meerly a Heat and Ferment of their Blood and Spirits; A Courage, wherein *Game-Cocks* and *Maſtiffs* out-vie the greateſt *Heroes* of them all. But as to that which is truly Rational and Manly, which conſiſts in a firm Compoſedneſs of Mind in the midſt of Evil or Dangerous Accidents, they are

are the moſt wretched Cowards in Nature. For the true *Fortitude* of the Mind conſiſts in being hardened againſt Evil upon *Rational Principles*; in being ſo fenced and guarded with *Reaſon* and *Conſideration*, as that no dolorous Accident from without is able to invade it, or raiſe any violent Commotions in it; In a word, in having ſuch a conſtant Power over its *Iraſcible* Affections, as not to be over-prone either to be timorous in Danger, or envious in Want, or impatient in Suffering, or angry at Contempt, or malicious and revengeful under Injuries and Provocations. And till we have in ſome meaſure acquired this Vertue, we can never be happy either here or hereafter.

For whilſt we are in this World, we muſt expect to be encompaſſed with continual Crouds of Evil Accidents, ſome or other of which will be always preſſing upon and juſtling againſt us: So that if our Minds are *ſore* and *uneaſie*, and over-apt to be *affected* with the Evil, we ſhall be continually *pained* and *diſquieted*. For whereas were our Minds but *calm* and *eaſie*, all the Evil Accidents that befall us would be but like a Showre of Hail upon the Tiles of a Muſick-Houſe, which with all its *Clatter* and *Noiſe* diſturbs not the Harmony that is *within*; our being too apt to be moved into Paſſion by them, *uncovers* our Mind to them, and lays it open to the Tempeſt. And commonly the greateſt Hurt which theſe outward Evils do us, is, the *diſturbing* our Minds into violent Paſſions; and this they will never ceaſe doing, till we have throughly *fortified* our Reaſon againſt them. For if our *Reaſon* commands not our Paſſions,

Paſſions, to be ſure *outward Accidents* will; and while they do ſo, we are Tenants at will to them for all our Peace and Happineſs; and according as they happen to be *Good* or *Bad*, ſo muſt we be ſure ſtill to be *Happy* and *Miſerable*. And in this Condition, like a Ship without a Pilot, in the midſt of a Tempeſtuous Sea, we are the ſport of every Wind and Wave, and know not, till the Event hath determin'd it, how the next Billow will diſpoſe of us; whether it will daſh us againſt a *Rock*, or drive us into a quiet *Harbour*.

So miſerable is our Condition *here*, while we are utterly deſtitute of this Vertue of *Fortitude*; But much more miſerable will the want of it neceſſarily render us *hereafter*. For all thoſe *Affections* which fall under the Inſpection and Government of *Fortitude*, are, in their *Exceſſes*, naturally vexatious to the Mind, and do always diſturb and raiſe Tumults in it. For ſo *Wrath* and *Impatience* diſtracts and alienates it from it ſelf, and confounds its Thoughts, and ſhuffles them together into a heap of wild and diſorderly Fancies; ſo *Malice*, *Envy*, and *Revenge*, do fill it with anxious biting Thoughts, that, like young Vipers, gnaw the Womb that bears them, and fret and gall the wretched Mind that forms and gives them Entertainment. And though in this World we are not ſo ſenſible of the miſchief which theſe black and rancorous Paſſions do us; partly, becauſe our ſenſe of them is *abated* with the intermixture of our Bodily Pleaſures; and partly, becauſe while we operate as we do, by theſe unweildy Organs of Fleſh, our Reflections cannot, be comparably ſo *quick*, nor our Paſſions ſo *violent*, nor

nor our Perceptions ſo *brisk* and *exquiſite* as they will doubtleſs be, when we are ſtript into naked Spirits; yet if we go away into the other World with theſe *Affections unmortified* in us, they will not only be far more *violent* and *outragious* than now, and we ſhall not only have a far quicker Senſe of them than now; but this our ſharp Senſe of them ſhall be *pure* and *ſimple*, without any intermixture of Pleaſure to ſoften and allay it. And if ſo, Good Lord! What exquiſite *Devils* and *Tormentors* will they prove, when an extreme *Rage* and *Hate*, *Envy* and *Revenge* ſhall be all together, like ſo many hungry Vultures preying on our Hearts; and our Mind ſhall be continually *baited* and *worried* with all the furious Thoughts which theſe outragious Paſſions can ſuggeſt to us. When with the meagre Eyes of *Envy* we ſhall look up towards the Regions of Happineſs, and inceſſantly *pine* and *grieve* at the Felicities of thoſe that inhabit them; when, through a Senſe of our own *Follies*, and of the miſerable effects of them, our *Rage* and *Impatience* ſhall be heightned, and boiled up into a *Diabolical Fury*; and when, at the ſame time, an inveterate *Malice* againſt all that we converſe with, and a fierce deſire of *Revenging* our ſelves upon thoſe who have contributed to our Ruine, ſhall, like a Wolf in our Breaſts, be continually gnawing and feeding upon our Souls, what an inſupportable *Hell* ſhall we be to our ſelves! Doubtleſs, that *Outward Hell* to which bad Spirits are condemned is very terrible; but I cannot imagine, but that the worſt of their Hell is *within* themſelves, and that their own *Deviliſh Paſſions* are ſeverer *Furies* to them than all thoſe

Devils

Devils, that are without them. For *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Revenge*, are both the Nature and the Plague of Devils; and though, as Angels, they are the Creatures of God; yet, as Devils, they are the Creatures of theſe their Deviliſh *Affections*; they were *theſe* that transformed them from Bleſſed Angels into Curſed Fiends; and could they but once ceaſe to be *envious* and *malicious*, they would ceaſe to be Devils, and turn Bleſſed Angels again. If then theſe rancorous *Affections* have ſuch a malignant Influence as to *blacken* Angels into Devils, and make them the moſt miſerable who were once the moſt *happy* Creatures; how can we ever expect to be happy, ſo long as we indulge and harbour them?

Wherefore, to remove this great Impediment of our Happineſs, Chriſtianity ſtrictly enjoins us to practiſe this neceſſary Vertue of *Fortitude*, which conſiſts in the due Regulation of all theſe our *Iraſcible Affections*; in moderating our *Anger* and *Impatience*, ſuppreſſing our *Envy*, and extinguiſhing all our unreaſonable *Hatred* and Deſire of *Revenge*. For hitherto tend all thoſe Evangelical Precepts which require us to *put away all bitterneſs and wrath, all clamour and evil-ſpeaking, and malice*, Eph. iv. 31. *to lay aſide all malice, and to be Children in malice*, 1 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *to be ſtrengthened with all might unto all patience and long-ſuffering*, Col. i. 11. And accordingly all the Vertues which are comprehended in this of *Fortitude* are reckoned among the Fruits of that Bleſſed Spirit by which we are to be guided and directed, *Gal.* v. 22. *But the fruit of the ſpirit is peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, and meekneſs*; all which are

are nothing but this great Vertue of *Fortitude*, ſeverally exerting it ſelf upon thoſe ſeveral *Iraſcible Affections* that are in us, and guiding and regulating them according to thoſe Laws and Directions which Right Reaſon ſeverally preſcribes them; and ſetting ſuch Bounds and Limits to each of them as are neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of our Rational Natures; that ſo when Outward Dangers or Evils do excite them, they may not ſtart out into ſuch wild Exceſſes as to become *Plagues* and *Diſeaſes* to our Minds.

Now how much the Practice of this Vertue conduces to our Heavenly Happineſs, is evident from hence, That all the diſeaſes and diſtemperatures which our Mind is capable of, are nothing elſe but the *Exceſſes* of its *Concupiſcible* and *Iraſcible Affections*; nothing but its being affected with Good and Evil *beyond* thoſe Limits and Meaſures which Right Reaſon preſcribes. Did we but love Outward Goods according to the Value at which true Reaſon rates them, we ſhould neither be vexed with an *impatient Deſire* of them, while we *want*, nor diſappointed of our *Expectation*, while we *enjoy* them. And when our Deſires towards theſe Outward Goods are reduced to that Coolneſs and Moderation, as neither to be *impatient* in the *Purſuit*, nor diſſatisfied in the *Enjoyment* of them, it is impoſſible they ſhould give any Diſturbance to our Minds. And ſo, on the other hand, did we but take care to regulate our Reſentments of Outward Evils and Dangers as Right Reaſon adviſes, they would never be able to *hurt* or *diſcompoſe* our Minds. For Right Reaſon adviſes, that we ſhould not ſo reſent them, as

to

to *encreaſe* and *aggravate* them; that we ſhould not add the Diſquietude of an *Anxious Fear* to the Dangers that threaten us, nor the Torment of an *Outragious Anger* to the Indignities that are offered us, nor the Smart of a *Peeviſh Impatience* to the Sufferings that befall us; in a word, that we ſhould not aggravate our Want through an *invidious pining* at another's Fulneſs, nor ſharpen the Injuries that are offered us by a *malicious* and *revengeful* Reſentment of them. And he that follows theſe Advices of *Reaſon*, and conducts his *Iraſcible Affections* by them, has a Mind that is elevated above the Reach of Injury; that ſits above the Clouds in a calm and quiet Æther, and with a brave Indifferency hears the rowling Thunders grumble and burſt under its feet. And whilſt Outward Evils fall upon *timorous* and *peeviſh* and *malicious* Spirits, like Sparks of Fire upon a Heap of Gunpowder, and do preſently blow them up, and put them all in Combuſtion; when they happen to a *diſ-paſſionate* Mind, they fall like Stones on a Bed of Down, where they ſit eaſily and quietly, and are received with a calm and ſoft Compliance. When therefore by the continual Practice of *Moderation* and *Fortitude* we have tamed and civilized our *Concupiſcible* and *Iraſcible* Affections, and reduced them under the Government of Reaſon, our Minds will be free from all *Diſeaſe* and *Diſturbance*, and we ſhall be liable to no other Evil but that of Bodily Senſe and Paſſion. So that when we leave our *Bodies*, and go into the World of *Spirits*, we ſhall preſently feel our ſelves in perfect *Health* and *Eaſe*. For the *Health* of a Reaſonable Soul conſiſts in being

perfectly

perfectly Reasonable, in having all its Affections *perfectly* subdued to a well-inform'd Mind, and cloathed in the Livery of its Reason. And while it is thus, it cannot be diseased in that *Spiritual* State wherein it will be wholly separated from all *bodily* Sense and Passion; because it has no Affection in it that can any way disturb or ruffle its calm and gentle Thoughts. And then feeling all within it self to be *well*, and as it should be; every String tuned into a perfect Harmony; every Motion and Affection corresponding with the most perfect *draughts* and *models* of its own Reason, it must needs highly *approve* of, and be perfectly *satisfied* with it self; and while it surveys its own Motions and Actions, it must necessarily have a most delicious Gust and Relish of them, they being all such as its best and purest Reason approves of, with a *full* and *ungainsaying* Judgment. And thus the Soul being cured of all irregular Affection, and removed from *all corporeal* Passion, will live in perfect *Health* and *Vigour*, and for ever enjoy within it self a Heaven of *Content* and *Peace*.

IV. Another Vertue which appertains to a Man considered meerly as a *Rational Animal*, is *Temperance*; which consists in not indulging our *Bodily Appetites* to the hurt and prejudice of our *Rational Nature*; Or, in refraining from all those *Excesses* of Bodily Pleasure, of Eating, Drinking, and Venery, which do either *disorder* our *Reason*, or *indispose* us to enjoy the pure and spiritual Pleasures of the Mind. For besides that all Excesses of *Bodily* Pleasures are naturally prejudicial to our *Reason*, as they indispose those

Bodily Organs by which it operates, (For ſo *Drunkenneſs* dilutes the Brain, which is the Mint of the Underſtanding, and drowns thoſe Images it ſtamps upon it in a Flood of unwholſome Rheums and Moiſtures; and *Gluttony* cloggs the Animal Spirits, which are, as it were, the Wings of the Mind, and indiſpoſes them for the Higheſt and Nobleſt Flights of Reaſon; ſo *Wantonneſs* chaſes the Blood into Feveriſh Heats, and by cauſing it to boil up too faſt into the Brain, diſorders the Motions of the Spirits there, and ſo confounds the *Phantaſms*, that the Mind can have no clear or diſtinct Perception of them; by which means our Intellectual Faculties are very often *interrupted*, and forced to ſit ſtill for want of proper Tools to work with, and ſo, by often *loitering*, grow, by degrees, *liſtleſs* and *unactive*, and at the laſt are utterly *indiſpoſed* to any Rational Operations;) Beſides this, I ſay, (which muſt needs be a mighty prejudice to our Rational Nature) by too much *familiarizing* our ſelves to *bodily* Pleaſures, we ſhall break off all our *acquaintance* with *ſpiritual* ones; and grow, by degrees, ſuch utter ſtrangers to them, that we ſhall never be able to reliſh and enjoy them; and our *Soul* will contract ſuch an *Uxorious Fondneſs* of the *Body* (*that* being the Shop of all the Pleaſure it was ever acquainted with) that 'twill never be able to live happily without it. For though in its ſeparate ſtate it cannot be ſuppoſed that the Soul will retain the *Appetites* of the Body; yet, if while it is in the Body, it wholly abandons it ſelf to *Corporeal* Pleaſures, it may, and doubtleſs will, retain a vehement *hankering* after it, and *longing* to be re-

united

united to it; which, I conceive, is the only ſenſuality that a ſeparated Soul is capable of. For when ſuch a Soul arrives into the Spiritual World, her having wholly accuſtom'd her ſelf to *bodily* Pleaſures, and never experienc'd *any other*, will neceſſarily render her incapable of enjoying the Pleaſures of Pure and Bleſſed Spirits. So that being left utterly deſtitute of all her dear Delights and Satisfactions, which are ſuch as ſhe knows ſhe can never enjoy but in *conjunction* with the *Body*, all her Appetite and Longing muſt neceſſarily be an outragious Deſire of being *Embodied* again, that ſo ſhe may be capable of repeating her old *ſenſual* Pleaſures, and acting over the *brutiſh* Scene a-new.

And this, as ſome think, is the Reaſon why ſuch *groſs* and *ſenſual* Souls have appeared ſo often, after their ſeparation, in the *Church-yards*, or *Charnel-Houſes*, where their Bodies were laid; becauſe they cannot pleaſe themſelves without them: Ἡ δὲ (ψυχὴ) ἐπιθυμητικῶς τοῦ σώματος ἔχουσα, περὶ ἐκεῖνο πολὺν χρόνον ἐπτοημένη, καὶ περὶ τὴν ὅρατον τόπον Πολλὰ ὑπτιτείνασα, καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα, βίᾳ καὶ μόλις ὑπὸ τοῦ προστεταγμένου δαίμονος οἴχεται ἀγομένη· *The Soul that is infected with a great Luſt to the Body, continues ſo, for a great while after Death, and ſuffering great Reluctances, hovers about this viſible place, and is hardly drawn from thence by force, by the Dæmon that hath the Guard and Care of it.* Where, by the *viſible Place*, he means, Περὶ τὰ μνήματά τε καὶ τοὺς τάφους, περὶ ἃ δὴ καὶ ὤφθη ἅττα ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα· That is, *About their Monuments and*

Plat. Phæd. pag. 398.

Ibid. pag. 386.

Sepulchres, where the ſhadowy Phantaſms of ſuch Souls have ſometimes appeared. For being utterly unacquainted with the Pleaſures of *Spirits*, they have nothing in all the Spiritual World to feed their hungry Deſire, which makes them, when they are permitted to wander, to hover about, and linger after their *Bodies*; the Impoſſibility of being re-united to them, not being able to cure them of their impotent Deſire of it, but ſtill they would fain be alive again, and re-aſſume their old Inſtruments of Pleaſure;

——— *Iterumque ad tarda reverti*
Corpora: ———
——— *Quæ lucis miſeris tam dira Cupido?*

And hence, among other Reaſons, it was, that the Primitive Chriſtians did ſo ſeverely abſtain from Bodily Pleaſures, that by this means they might gently *wean* the Soul from the Body, and teach it before-hand to live upon the Delights of ſeparated Spirits; that ſo, upon its ſeparation, it might drop into Eternity, like ripe Fruit from the Tree, with Eaſe and Willingneſs; and that by accuſtoming it before to *ſpiritual* Pleaſures and Delights, it might acquire ſuch a ſavoury Senſe and Reliſh of them, as to be able, when it came into the *Spiritual* World, to live wholly upon them; and to be ſo entirely ſatisfied with them, as not to be endleſly vex'd with a tormenting Deſire of returning to the Body again. For ſo

Pædag. *l.* 2. *c.* 1. *p.* 141. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, Ἡμῖν ὁ τοῖς σηρωμένοις ἢ βρῶσιν ἢ ἐπιθυμίαν, ἄρχειν ἀνάγκη ἢ ὕπνου ἢ ὑγροῦ γαστρός, ἔτι τε μᾶλλον

μᾶλλον χρὴ περὶ ταύτης προσέχειν· *We that are hunting after the Heavenly Food, muſt take heed that we keep our Earthly Belly in ſubjection, and to keep a ſtrict Government over thoſe things that are pleaſant to it.* For ſaith he, a little before, Οὔτε γὰρ ἔργον ἡμῶν ἡ τροφὴ ἔστε σκοπὸς ἡδονή· ἀλλὰ δι' ἃ ἐνταῦθα διαμονῆς, ἵν' ὁ λόγος εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν παιδαγωγῇ· *Neither* (ſaith he) *is Food our Work, nor Pleaſure our Aim; but we uſe them only as Neceſſaries to our preſent Abode, in which our Reaſon is inſtituting, and training us up to a Life incorruptible: i. e.* They did ſo uſe them, as that, as much as in them lay, they might wean their Souls from the Pleaſures of them, that ſo they might have the better Appetite to that Spiritual Food upon which they were to live for ever. Ibid. *pag.* 139.

And therefore thus to *temperate* and *reſtrain* our ſelves in the Uſe of Bodily Pleaſures, is one of the neceſſary Vertues of the *Chriſtian Life.* For hitherto tend all thoſe Precepts concerning *Abſtaining from fleſhly luſts which war againſt our Souls,* 1 Pet. ii. 11. and *mortifying the deeds of the body,* Rom. viii. 13. and *keeping under the Body,* 1 Cor. ix. 27. and *putting off the body of the ſins of the Fleſh,* Col. ii. 11. And we are ſtrictly enjoined *to be temperate in all things, to watch and be ſober, and walk honeſtly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in exceſs of wine, revellings and banquettings.* The ſence of all which, is, That we ſhould not indulge our *Bodily* Appetites, to the vitiating and depraving of our *Spiritual*; that we ſhould not plunge our ſelves ſo far in the Pleaſures of the *Fleſh,* as to

drown our Senſe and Perception of *Divine* and *Heavenly* Enjoyments; but that we ſhould ſo far ſubdue and mortifie our *Senſuality*, as that it may not have the *Dominion* over us, nor be the *prevalent* Delight and Complacency of our Souls; but that the *commanding* Biaſs, and *ſwaying* Propenſion within us, may be towards Divine and Heavenly Enjoyments; that ſo, when we leave this Body, we may not be ſo *wedded* to the Pleaſures of it, as not to be able to be Happy without them; but that we may carry with us into Eternity, ſuch a quick Senſe and lively Relliſh of the Pleaſures above, as to be able to *live upon*, and be for ever *ſatisfied* with them.

So that at firſt view it is evident how much the Practice of this Vertue conduces to our Future Happineſs. For by taking us off from all Exceſs of Bodily Pleaſure, it diſpoſes us to enjoy the Pleaſures of Heaven, and *connaturalizes* our Souls to them: So that when after a long Exerciſe of *Temperance*, we come to leave the *Body*, our Soul will be ſo looſened from it before-hand, and rendred ſo indifferent to the *Delights* of it, that we ſhall be able to part both with *It* and *Them*, without any great *Regret* or *Reluctancy*, and to live from them for ever, without any diſquieting *Longings* or *Hankerings* after them. For, as when we are grown up by Age and Experience to a ſenſe of more *manly* Pleaſures, we deſpiſe Nuts and Rattles, which, when we were *Children*, we accounted our Happineſs, and ſhould have reckoned our ſelves undone, had we been deprived of them; So when by the Practice of a ſevere *Temperance*, we have acquired a thorough ſenſe of the Pleaſures of *Ver-*

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tue and *Religion*, we ſhall look upon all our *bodily* Pleaſures as the little Toys and Fooleries of our Infant State, with which we pleaſed our childiſh Fancies when we knew no better. And whereas had we been deprived of them *then*, we ſhould have cried and bemoaned our ſelves, as little Children do when they loſe their Play-Games, and reckon our ſelves undone and miſerable; upon the Experience we have had of the *Nobler* and more *Generous* Pleaſures of Religion, we ſhall be able to deſpiſe theſe *little*, *poor* Entertainments of our Infancy; to take our leave of them without a Tear in our Eyes, and to live Eternally without miſſing them. For, our Minds being for the main reconciled to *Rational* and *Spiritual* Pleaſures, we ſhall put off all Remains of *bodily* Luſt with our *Bodies*, and ſo flie away into the Spiritual World with none but *Pure* and *Spiritual* Appetites about us; where meeting with an *infinite Fulneſs* of Spiritual Joys and Pleaſures, of which we had many a *foretaſte* in the Body, our *prediſpoſed* Mind will preſently cloſe with, and feed upon them, with ſuch an *unſpeakable* Content and Satisfaction, as will *raviſh* it for ever from the Thoughts of all other Pleaſures. So that now we ſhall not only be able to *ſubſiſt* without Fleſhly Delights, but to *deſpiſe* and *ſcorn* them; our Faculties being treated every moment with far *nobler* Fare, and *better* Joys.

V. Another of thoſe Vertues which belong to a Man conſidered meerly as a *Rational Animal*, is *Humility*; which conſiſts in a *modeſt* and *lowly* Opinion of our ſelves, and of our own *Acquiſitions*, *Merits*, or *Endowments*; Or, in not

valuing our selves beyond what is *due* and *just*, upon the account of any Good we are possessed off, whether it be *Internal* or *External*. For *Pride*, or an *over-weaning Self-Conceit*, is the Bane of all our Vertue and Happiness. It causes us to overlook our *Defects*, and thereby hinders us from making further *Improvement*; and it possesses us with an opinion that we *deserve* more than we have, and thereby renders us *dissatisfied* with our present Enjoyments. For by how much any Man *over-values* himself, by so much he *under-values* what he enjoys; because while he compares what he enjoys with the fond opinion that he hath of himself, he always finds it *short* of his Desert, and so can never be *satisfied* with it. Yea, such is the cross and capricious Humour of a proud Spirit, that the more it possesses, the bigger it swells with the opinion of its own Desert; and the *more* it is opinionated of its own Desert, the *less* it is satisfied with that which it possesses and enjoys. For when a Man is exceeding apt to *flatter* and *cokes* himself, he will catch at any Pretence to exalt his own Merit and Desert, and be ready to measure it, not only by what he *is*, but by what he *has* too; and then reckoning his *outward* Possessions to be the Rewards or Products of his *Inward* Worth, the more he *has*, the more he will still imagine he *deserves to have*. So that his *Opinion* of his own *Desert* will still run on so fast before his *Enjoyments*, that though they should follow it never so close, as the hinder Wheels of a Chariot do the fore ones, yet it would be impossible for them to overtake it; And so long as he conceives his Enjoyments to be *behind* his Desert, he will be always

always *diſcontented* and *diſſatisfied* with them; and while he continues of this Humour, the utmoſt Bliſs and Glory that Heaven affords would not be able to ſatisfie him. For if he were ſet equal in Glory with the *higheſt Saint*, he would be ſo puft and exalted by it in his own Conceit, that he would fanſie he merited the Glory of an *Angel*; and if from thence he were advanced to the Throne of an *Arch-Angel*, he would flatter himſelf into a conceit that he deſerved the Glory and Dignity of a *God*: And ſo long as he fanſied his Advancement to be *below* his Merit, he would never be *contented* with it, how *high* ſoever it were, but be continually *vexing* and *repining* that he was raiſed no *higher*.

And this, I verily believe, was the Temper of the *Devil*, and that which finally ruined and undid him. For when he was an *Angel* of *Light*, he was doubtleſs placed by the *Father* of *Spirits* in ſuch an Order or Degree of Dignity as became the Perfection of his Nature. But he, reflecting on his own Endowments, and the Glorious Condition wherein he was placed, began firſt to ſwell with an *arrogant* and *over-weaning* conceit of himſelf, and to ſet *too high* a value upon his own Angelical Graces and Perfections; and, as the natural Effect of this, to imagine that he was not high enough advanced in the Scale of the *Heavenly Hierarchy*; and that his *Station*, in the Commonwealth of Angels was *beneath* the Grandeur and Dignity of his Nature. This made him look up with *envious* Eyes upon the Glorious Orders *above* him, into whoſe ſublime Rank he being forbid to aſpire by God, the Prince of Spirits, he pro-

proceeded by degrees to malign and hate both *Him* and *Them*. And this he first expressed, by entring into a *Conspiracy* against him with some of his Fellow-Angels, whom he found most apt to be wrought upon by him; together with whom he made an open *Revolt*, forsook the Blessed Abodes, as not enduring to abide any longer amongst those Blessed Orders whom he so inveterately *hated* and *envied*; and so, with his revolted *Legions*, descends into this Aery Region, where ever since he hath persisted in open Hostility against God and Heaven. And accordingly it is said of him and his Accomplices, That they *kept not their first Station*; that is, they would needs have a *higher* Station in Heaven than that wherein God had placed them; which because they could not obtain, *they left their own Habitation*, *i. e.* forsook Heaven their Native Country and Abode, and came down into these lower Parts of the World, upon design to strengthen their Party against Heaven, by seducing Mankind into the same Revolt with themselves, *Jude* 6.

Thus 'twas the Devil's Pride, you see, that made him *Envious*, his *Envy* that made him *Spiteful* and *Malicious*, all which together made him a *Devil*. And thus it would be with *us*, if we could be admitted into Heaven, whilst we are under the Power and Prevalence of Pride and *Self-conceit*. For while we think better of our selves than God does, we shall never be *contented* with his Retributions, who will be sure to deal with every Man according to his Works; and that excessive value we shall have of our selves, will cause us to *undervalue* the Degree and Rank of Glory

Glory and Happineſs wherein we ſhall be placed by the Juſt Rewarder of Souls, as a Station much beneath our imagined Excellency and Perfection. And hence we ſhall proceed to *think hardly* of God, and to *repine* againſt Him as a partial and unequal Diſtributer of his Favours, and to *envy* and *malign* thoſe that were placed higher in Glory than our ſelves; and ſo at laſt, out of an implacable *Vexation* and *Diſcontent*, to leave our Habitations, as the Devils did, and fly away to their Revolted Party. So impoſſible is it for a Soul that is under a prevailing Habit of *Pride* and *Self-conceit*, to be happy either here or hereafter.

And therefore to remove this Obſtacle, Chriſtianity impoſes the Practice of *Humility*, as a neceſſary Means of our Happineſs; and requires us *to put on humbleneſs of mind*, Col. iii. 12. *to be cloathed with humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. *to walk with all lowlineſs and meekneſs*, Eph. iv. 1, 2. *and in lowlineſs of mind to eſteem others better than our ſelves*, Phil. ii. 3. In a word, to follow the Example of our Bleſſed Lord, who was *meek and lowly*, Mat. xi. 29. and *in honour to prefer one another*, Rom. xii. 10. The ſenſe of all which, is, that we ſhould labour, as much as in us lies, to think very *meanly* and *modeſtly* of our ſelves, and not to be diſcontented if *others* think *meanly* of us too; *i. e.* that we ſhould neither be *proud* nor *vain-glorious*, neither too much exalted in our *own* opinions, nor endeavour to inſinuate into *others* a higher opinion of us than we do really deſerve: In ſhort, that we ſhould ſo effectually repreſent to our ſelves the little Reaſon we have to be proud of any Perſonal Accompliſhment, whether it be of Body or Mind, to ſtrut,

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like *Æsop*'s Crow, in these borrowed Feathers, which we could neither *give* to our selves, nor *merit* of God, but are wholly owing for to the Divine Bounty; so to inculcate upon our Minds the Folly and Ridiculousness of being proud of any *Outward Goods* we possess; such as fine Cloaths, great Estates, or popular Reputation, all which are so far from either *making* or *speaking* us *wiser* or *better* Men, that they are too often the Fruits and Testimonies of our *Folly* and *Knavery*; And, in fine, That we should so impartially reflect upon the many Follies and Indiscretions, Errors and Ignorances, Irregularities of Temper, Defects of Manners, and Deviations from Right Reason, that we are guilty of, as to shame our selves out of all those *proud* and *arrogant* Conceits that do so *swell* and *impossthumate* our Minds.

And when by these, and such like *humbling* Reflections, we have laid our selves low in our own Eyes, and so far abased our *Pride* and *Self-Conceit* as to be effectually convinced of the Folly of it, and throughly persuaded to abhorr and hate it, to watch and strive against it, and to be habituated for the main to *mean* and *lowly* thoughts of our selves; though we should not here arrive to an absolute Perfection in *Humility* (having none here to converse or compare our selves with but such as our selves, such as are many of them our *Inferiors*, many our *Equals*, and many but few degrees our *Superiors*,) yet as soon as we go off from this *lower* Form, in which we may seem so considerable, into the Class and Society of those Glorious Inhabitants *above* (in whose bright Presence

Preſence we ſhall appear but like ſo many *Glow-Worms* in the midſt of a Firmament of *Stars*) all the *little Remains* of Pride and Self-Conceit in us, will immediately vaniſh from our Minds. For if at the ſight of an Angel the *Beloved Apoſtle* could not forbear proſtrating himſelf; how *proſtrate* and *lowly* muſt we be, when we ſee not only the whole Choire of Angels together, but God Himſelf too, the Prince and Father of Spirits! For even here we find, that the *nearer* we approach God, the more we *ſhrink* and *leſſen* in our own Eyes; and if in the Preſence of *Angels* we are but *Dwarfs*, in the Preſence of *GOD* we ſhall be *Nothings*. But Oh! when we ſhall not only *diſcern* how infinitely he out-ſhines us in Glory, but ſhall alſo continually *feel*, by the moſt ſenſible Communications of his Goodneſs, how we hang upon Him, and derive every Breath, and Joy, and Glory from Him; how our Being and Well-being are the meer Alms and Penſions of His Bounty; how every Grace and Beauty in us, is but the Reflection, and that a faint one too, of his out-ſtretched Rays; when, I ſay, we ſhall feel all this, as we ſhall do in Heaven every moment, by a quick and ſenſible Experience, how muſt it needs wean us from all *ſelf-arrogating* Thoughts, and perfectly *abaſe* and *humble* us in our own Eyes! And when this is done, our Minds will be perfectly *tempered* and *prepared* for the Enjoyment of a perfect Happineſs: For now, ſuch a *modeſt* Opinion we ſhall have of our ſelves, that whatſoever degree of Glory we are placed in, we ſhall look upon it as far beyond our deſert, and, upon that account, be unſpeakably *ſatisfied* and *contented* with it, and freely

acknow-

acknowledge it to be a Thouſand Degrees beyond what we could deſire or hope for. And ſo far ſhall we be from *grudging* at, or *envying* thoſe above us, that out of an *humble* ſenſe of our own Unworthineſs, we ſhall readily preferr them before our ſelves, and freely acknowledge that we are only ſo many Degrees *inferiour* to *them* in Glory, as they are *ſuperiour* to us in Divine Graces and Perfections. Upon which we ſhall not only *acquieſce*, but heartily *rejoyce* in their Advancement, and be abundantly *pleaſed* that their *Reward* is as much greater than ours, as we do acknowledge their *Vertue* to be. In a word, ſo far ſhall we be from *repining* and *murmuring* at God, for not rewarding *us* as liberally as *others*, that we ſhall be throughly ſenſible that He hath been bountiful to us infinitely beyond our *Deſert* or *Expectation*; that 'twas not out of a fond *Partiality*, or blind *Reſpect of Perſons*, that He raiſed others to higher Degrees of Glory than our ſelves, but out of a Principle of ſtrict *Juſtice* that exactly balances and adjuſts its Rewards according to the Degrees of our Deſert and Improvement. The ſenſe of which will not only compoſe our Minds into a perfect *Satisfaction*, but alſo continually excite us to thoſe Beatifical Acts of *Love* and *Praiſe*, *Thanksgiving* and *Adoration*. Thus *Humility*, you ſee, tunes and compoſes us for Heaven, and only caſts us down, like Balls, that we may rebound the higher in Glory and Happineſs.

Thus you ſee how all thoſe Vertues which appertain to a Man conſidered as a *Reaſonable Animal*, conduce to the Great Chriſtian End, *viz.* The Happineſs of Heaven. 'Tis true, indeed, the imme-

immediate product of this ſort of Vertue, is only, at leaſt *chiefly*, *privative* Happineſs, or, the Happineſs of *Reſt* and *Indolence*, which conſiſts in *not being miſerable*, or, in a perfect *ceſſation* from all ſuch Acts and Motions as are *hurtful* and *injurious* to a *Rational Spirit*. For, as I have ſhewed you in the beginning of this Section, the proper Office of *Humane Vertue* conſiſts in ſo regulating all our Powers of Action, as that we do nothing that is hurtful or injurious to our Rational Nature; and thus, you plainly ſee, theſe Five afore-named Vertues do moſt effectually perform. But beſides this *Privative*, there is, as I ſhewed you, a *Poſitive* Part of Happineſs, which conſiſts not in *Reſt*, but in *Motion*; in the Vigorous Exerciſe of our Rational Faculties upon ſuch Objects as are moſt ſuitable to them: And to the obtaining of this Part of our Happineſs, there are other kinds of Vertues neceſſary to be practiſed by us, of which I ſhall diſcourſe in the two following Sections. But though the *immediate* Effect of theſe *Humane Vertues* we have been diſcourſing of, be only the Happineſs of *Reſt*, yet do they tend a great deal farther, even to the Happineſs of *Motion* and *Exerciſe*. For it is impoſſible ſo to ſuppreſs that Active Principle within us, as to make it totally ſurceaſe from Motion; and therefore as every intermiſſion of its *ſober* and *regular* Actings does but make way for *wild* and *extravagant* ones; ſo every abatement of its *hurtful* and *injurious* Motions, makes way for *beatifical* ones; and ſo the *Humane Vertues*, by giving us Reſt from thoſe Motions that are *afflictive* to our Natures, encline and diſpoſe us to ſuch Motions and Exerciſes as are moſt *pleaſant* and *grateful* to it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Concerning those Divine Vertues *which belong to a Man considered as a Reasonable Creature, related to* God; *shewing that these also are comprehended in the Heavenly Part of the* Christian Life, *and that the Practice of them effectually conduces to our Future Happiness.*

I proceed now to the Second kind of Vertues, *viz. Divine*; to which, I told you, we are obliged in the capacity of Reasonable Creatures related to *God*, who being not only endowed with all possible Perfections, with infinite *Truth* and *Justice*, *Wisdom* and *Power*, with all that can render any Being most highly *reverenced*, *admired*, *loved* and *adored*; who being not only the Author of our Being and Well-being, as he is Creator and Preserver of all things, but also our Sovereign Lord and King, as He is God Almighty, the Supreme and Over-Ruling Power of Heaven and Earth, hath upon all these Accounts a just and unalienable claim to sundry Duties and Homages from His Creatures: All which I shall reduce to these Six Particulars;

1. That we should frequently *think of*, and *contemplate* the Beauty and Perfection of His Nature.

2. That upon the account of these Perfections we should humbly *worship* and *adore* Him.

3. That we should ardently *love*, and take *complacency* in Him.

4. That

4. That we ſhould attentively and unweariedly *imitate* him in all his imitable Perfections and Actions.

5. That we ſhould entirely *reſign up* our ſelves to his conduct and diſpoſal.

6. That we ſhould chearfully *rely* and *depend* upon him. All which, as I ſhall ſhew, are included in the Heavenly Part of the *Chriſtian Life*, and do moſt effectually contribute to our future Happineſs.

I. As we are Rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged to be often *contemplating* and *thinking upon* him. For the natural uſe of our Underſtanding is to contemplate Truth; and therefore the more of *Truth* and *Reality* there is in any knowable Object, and the farther it is removed from *Falſhood* and *Non-entity*, the more the Underſtanding is concerned to *contemplate* and *think upon* it. *God* therefore being the moſt *true* and *real* Object, as he ſtands removed by the *neceſſity* of his exiſtence from all *poſſibility* of not-being; muſt needs be the moſt perfect Theme of our Underſtanding, the beſt and greateſt Subject on which it can employ its Meditations. And beſides that he is the moſt *true* and *real* of all beings, he is alſo the ſource and ſpring of all *Truth* and *Reality*, his Power, conducted by his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, being the cauſe not only of all that *is*, but of all that either *ſhall* be, or *can* be. And is it fit that our Underſtanding which was made to *contemplate*, ſhould wholly overlook the Fountain of it? But beſides this too, that he is the greateſt *Truth* himſelf, and the Cauſe of every thing elſe that is *true* and *real*, he is the Sovereign of Beings,

and the moſt *amiable* and *perfect*, as he includes in his infinite Eſſence all poſſible Perfections, both in kind and degree. And what a monſtrous Irreverence is it, for Minds that were framed to the contemplation of Truth, to paſs by ſuch a *great* and *glorious* one without any regard or obſervance; as if he ſtood for a Cypher in the World, and were not worthy to be thought upon? Nay, and beſides all this, (which one would think were enough to oblige our Underſtandings to the ſtricteſt attendance to him) he is a Truth in which, above all others, we are moſt *nearly concerned*, as he is not only the *Father* and *Prop* of our Beings, and the *Conſolation* of our Lives, but the ſole *Arbiter* of our Fate too, upon whom our everlaſting well or ill being depends. And what can we be more concerned to *think* and *meditate* upon than this Great Being, from whom we ſprang, in whom we live and breathe, and of whom we are to expect all that Evil or Good that we can fear or hope for. All which conſidered, there is no doubt to be made but that our Underſtanding was chiefly made for God, to look up to Him, and contemplate his Being and Perfections. And though in this *imperfect* State it is too often averted from him, by this vaſt variety of ſenſual things that ſurround it, and intercept his Proſpect; yet as our Soul recovers out of this *ſenſual* condition into a life of *Reaſon*, we find by experience that its Underſtanding preſently looks upwards, by a natural Inſtinct, and directs it ſelf to God, as to its proper *Pole* and *Center*. And as it grows more and more *indifferent* to the objects of Senſe, ſo it becomes more and more *vigorous* in its tendency towards

towards God and Divine Things. And 'tis no wonder it doth ſo, ſince it is God only who is an *infinite* Truth, that is able to ſatisfie its *infinite* Thirſt after Truth. And hence it is, that till we have throughly fixed our Minds and Wills upon God, we do naturally affect ſuch an *Infinity* of Objects, that our Deſires are always reaching at *new* Pleaſures, and carried forth after *new* Poſſeſſions; that our Fancy is always entertaining our Mind with *new* Idea's, and our Underſtanding continually calling for *new* Scenes of Contemplation. By which, as one hath well obſerved, the Soul declares that it is not to be perfectly pleaſed with *finite* Truth or Good. Which poſſibly may be the reaſon of that delight we take in Fables, and Pictures of Anticks and Monſters, becauſe they *exceed* the limits of Truth, and ſo do *enlarge*, as it were, the Proſpect of the Soul, which by its unconfined Motions, ſhews that it is of a Divine Extract, and that it can never be perfectly ſatisfied but in union with God, who is an infinite Ocean of Truth and Goodneſs. For as for all other Beings, they are ſo very *ſhallow*, that we quickly ſee (or at leaſt ſhall do, when we ſee after the manner of Spirits) to the very bottom of their Truth and Reality; and when we have done that, they have no more in them to feed and entertain our Underſtandings. So that when we have exhauſted the Truth of *finite* Beings, we muſt either ceaſe to underſtand any more, which would be to deprive our nobleſt Faculty of any farther Pleaſure, or we muſt at laſt fix our Mind upon God, in whom it will find ſuch *infinite* Truth, as will be ſufficient to exerciſe it through-

out all its *infinite* Duration. But unless we do *now* acquaint our Minds with God, by frequent *thinking* and *meditating* upon him, we shall by degrees grow such *Strangers* to him, that, by that time we go into the other World, we shall be so far from being *pleased* with contemplating him, that we shall look upon him as an *uncouth* Object, and out of distaste *avert* and turn our eyes from him. For the Mind of Man must be *familiariz'd* to its Objects, before it will be able to contemplate them with *pleasure*; and though the Objects themselves be never so *amiable*, yet while the Mind is *unus'd* to them, its thoughts will *start* and *flie off* from them, and, without a great deal of violence, will never be reduced to a *fix'd* and *serious* attention to them. So that if we go into Eternity with Minds *unaccustom'd* to the thoughts of God, we shall be continually flying away from him, as Bats and Owls do from the light of the Sun, and never be able to compose our *awkward* thoughts into a fixed contemplation of his Glory. And when we have thus banish'd our selves from the only Object that can for ever *bless* and *satisfie* our Understanding, that can keep it in everlasting *exercise* and *motion*, and feed its greedy thoughts eternally with *fresh* and *glorious* discoveries, we have utterly lost one of the sweetest Pleasures that Humane Nature is capable of; and so must necessarily *pine* and *languish*, under an eternal Discontentedness. To prevent which, the Gospel enjoins us to train up our Minds to Divine *Contemplation*, and to be frequently *thinking* and *meditating* upon God; *to mind those things that are above*, for so the Greek word is to be rendred, *Col.* iii. 1. *To sanctifie the Lord*

Lord God in our hearts, 1 Pet. iii. 15. that is, by entertaining great and worthy Thoughts of him. And therefore the Gospel is set before us as a *Glass*, that therein we may *contemplate and behold the glory of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. namely, that Divine Glory which is therein discovered and revealed to us; that we may set him always before our Minds, and *gather up* our Thoughts about him, and force them to *dwell* and *stay* upon him, that so they may taste and relish his heavenly Beauties, and please and satisfie themselves with the view and contemplation of them. For though to meditate closely upon God, may at first be *irksom* and tedious to our unexperienc'd Minds; yet when by the constant practice of it, we have worn off that *Strangeness* towards God, which renders the thoughts of him so *troublesome* to us, and by frequent converses are grown better acquainted with him, we shall grow by degrees so *pleased* and *satisfied* with the thoughts of him, that we shall not know how to live *without* them; and our minds at last will be touch'd with such a lively sense of his attractive Beauties, that we shall never be well but while we are with him; so that he will become the constant Companion of our Thoughts, and the daily Theme of our *Meditations*; and nothing in the World will be so *grateful* and *acceptable* to us, as to retire now and then from the World, and converse with God in holy *Contemplations*. And though by reason of our present *Circumstances* and *Necessities*, there is no remedy but our thoughts must be often diverted from him, and forced to attend to our secular occasions; yet after they have been used a while to God, we

ſhall find they will never be ſo well pleaſed, nor ſo much at eaſe as when they are retired from every thing but God, and compoſed and ſetled into divine Meditations. So that when we go away into the other World, where we ſhall be removed from thoſe troubleſome *Circumſtances* and *Neceſſities* which did here ſo often divert our Thoughts from God; our Minds, which have been ſo long accuſtomed and habituated to him, will immediately faſten upon him, and entirely devote themſelves to the Contemplation of his Nature and Glory. For our Minds being already ſtrongly *enclined* and *byaſſed* towards God by thoſe grateful foretaſtes we have had of him in the Warmths of our Meditation, when we come into the ſtill and quiet Regions of the Bleſſed, where we ſhall immediately have a more cloſe and intimate view of him than ever, all our Thoughts will naturally run towards him, and be ſo captivated with the firſt ſight of his Glory, that we ſhall never be able to look off again, as long as Eternity endures, but *one* view will invite us to *another*, and what we ſee will ſo tranſport and raviſh us, that we ſhall ſtill deſire to ſee further and further. And becauſe our finite Mind will never be able fully to comprehend all that is *knowable* in his infinite Being, we ſhall be ſo delighted in every further Knowledge of him, that we ſhall ſtill deſire to know further; and that *Deſire*, as faſt as it ſprings, ſhall ſtill be ſatisfied with a further *Knowledge*, and ſo to eternal Ages, each new Satisfaction ſhall immediately bring a new Deſire, and each new Deſire immediately terminate in a new Satisfaction. And now, O happy Mind! what Tongue can expreſs thy

Joys

Joys and Raptures! that being thus in conjunction with God, art always filled with glorious Idea's, and compaſſed round with the Wonders of his Perfection; ſo that at every glance thou ſeeſt ſome new *Charm*, and with every thought makeſt ſome vaſt *Diſcovery*. O the tranſporting Pleaſure of that bleſſed Viſion! which now I can hardly think of without an Ecſtaſie; when my poor longing Mind, which here gropes about for Truth in a dark dungeon of Error and Ignorance, ſhall be let forth into the Heavenly Light, to ſee as it is ſeen, and know as it is known: how will it fix its greedy Eyes upon God, of whoſe acquaintance it is now ſo deſirous! With what infinite delight will its winged and active Thoughts hover in the light of his Countenance, which through every moment of Eternity will be ſtill revealing new Beauties to us, ſuch as will not only for ever *employ*, but for ever *inflame* our Meditations.

II. As we are Rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged humbly to *Worſhip* and *Adore* him; that is, that out of a moſt awful Eſteem and profound Reverence of his ſuper-excellent Majeſty, and boundleſs Perfections, we ſhould bow down our Souls before him, and addreſs our ſelves to him by *Invocation* and *Prayer*, by *Praiſe* and *Thankſgiving*, as to the All-ſufficient, Independent, and ſole Diſpoſer of every good and perfect gift; and that in theſe our Addreſſes we ſhould outwardly expreſs this our reverential Eſteem of him, by ſuch humble geſtures of Body, as are moſt apt to teſtifie it to others. For all this is but a juſt and due acknowledgment of what he is in *Himſelf*, and to *Us*, and all his *Creation*. The profoundeſt

Reverence and Veneration we can pay him, is but a just acknowledgment of his infinite *Majesty* and *Power*; the most fervent Invocations and Prayers we can offer him, are but a due owning of him to be what he is, the Supreme *Disposer* and *Author* of all things; the most ample and glorious Praises we can give him are incomparably short of what is owing to his infinite *Excellencies* and *Perfections*; the most thankful Acknowledgments we can make him, are but poor Compositions for those vast Sums which we owe to his *Bounty* and *Liberality*. So that all our Worship is a most just Due arising from what he is in *himself*, and from what he doth to *us*, and to all his *Creatures*. And till we are made throughly sensible of both, we are utterly incapable of Eternal Happiness; which consisting (as I shewed you before) in the vigorous exercise of our Rational Faculties upon God, doth necessarily require that we should be duly affected with his Perfections and Actions. For unless we are so, we shall never be able to engage our Faculties vigorously to employ and exercise themselves about him; unless our Minds be over-awed with an habitual sense of his infinite Majesty and Power, we shall be apt to neglect him as an Object too mean for our great Faculties to converse with; unless our Minds be strongly disposed to *esteem* and *admire* his Glory and Excellencies, we shall never be able to excite our Understanding and Will to act upon him with any life and vigour: In a word, unless we are possessed with a constant sense that he is the *Spring* of all those goods which we enjoy or hope for, we shall be apt to look upon him as one with whom we are very little concerned, and so

ſo to neglect and diſregard him. So that unleſs we do now acquire an habitual Devotion of Mind towards God, when we go from hence into the other World, we ſhall find our Faculties ſo *averſe* and *Uſtleſs* to all that Heavenly Motion and Exerciſe wherein the Happineſs above conſiſts, that we ſhall be utterly incapable to taſte and enjoy it. For in Eternity our Souls will run according to the prevailing byaſs which they carry thither with them; but 'tis impoſſible they ſhould run towards God with *life* and *freedom*, unleſs they are conſtantly drawn and enclined to him by a devout Veneration of his Majeſty, and Admiration of his *Glory* and *Perfection*. And hence it is that the Goſpel doth ſo ſtrictly oblige us to *adore and worſhip God*, Rev. xxii. 9. *To worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth*, Joh. iv. 24. *To pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. and *pray always with all prayer and ſupplication*, that is, earneſtly to ſupplicate God upon every fit opportunity, and time of need, *Epheſ.* vi. 18. in a word, *to offer to God the ſacrifice of praiſe, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name*, Heb. xiii. 15. and *to thank God without ceaſing*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. The meaning of all which, is, that out of a deep and quick ſenſe of the infinite Majeſty and Power, All-ſufficiency and Beneficence of God, we ſhould be frequently bowing our ſelves before him, and offering up our Prayers and Praiſes, and Thankſgivings to him. And in the conſtant Practice of theſe we ſhall be growing up by degrees to that bliſsful ſtate of Heaven. For all theſe Acts of Divine Worſhip being immediate Addreſſes of our Minds to God, do ſo unite us to him, that in every hearty

hearty Prayer, Praiſe, or Thankſgiving, we do in a manner touch and feel him. For ſo while we humbly adore his Majeſty, we are ſenſibly ſtruck with the Rays of it; while we earneſtly *invocate* his Goodneſs and Mercy, we are touched with a ſtrong attractive Vertue from him, whereby we plainly feel our ſelves drawn up to him, and wrapt into a real enjoyment of him: In a word, while we are offering our hearty Praiſes and Thankſgivings to him, we are under a captivating ſenſe of his infinite Glory and Beneficence, and with a ſenſible touch of this his Heavenly Fire, our Hearts are kindled and inflamed. Inſomuch that while we are upon our Knees in a warmth and fervour of Devotion, our Minds have many times as *quick* a Perception, as *ſtrong* and *lively* a Reliſh of God, as ever our bodily Palate had of the moſt guſtful Meats or Liquors. So that by frequently repeating theſe our Devotions, we frequently repeat theſe our Senſations of God; which being often renewed, will grow more *vigorous* and *conſtant*, and ſo at laſt improve into an *active*, *permanent*, and *habitual* ſenſe of him. And having thus acquir'd, by our frequent and devout Worſhip, a *lively*, *conſtant* feeling and perception of the Majeſty and Glory, of the Bounty and Benignity of God, whenever we go into Eternity, this, like a vital Spring, will give a *perpetual motion* to our Faculties, and vigorouſly exert and employ them upon God for ever. The quick and lively Senſe we ſhall have of his Infinite Majeſty and Power will for ever awe our Underſtandings and Wills into a ſtrict attention and ſubmiſſion to him; and have ſuch a commanding Power over

over us as will even conſtrain us to regard him with the profoundeſt Reverence and Veneration. For there we ſhall have far greater and clearer apprehenſions of his Majeſty, than ever we had in this imperfect ſtate; which will improve our pre-acquired ſenſe of it to ſuch a degree of Reſpect and Veneration, as will for ever over-rule our Faculties, and keep our Underſtandings, Wills and Affections in cloſe and ſtrict attendance to him. And as our ſenſe of his Majeſty will ſweetly *command*, ſo our ſenſe of his infinite Beauty and Beneficence will invincibly *allure* us to exert and exerciſe our Faculties upon him. For he that hath an affectionate ſenſe of the Beauty, and Goodneſs, and Bounty of God, hath a Heart ready tuned for the Muſick of Heaven, ready ſet and compoſed for Everlaſting Praiſes and Hallelujah's. So that when he goes away from hence into the other World, and is there admitted to a more intimate View of the *Perfections*, and a more abundant Participation of the *Bleſſings* of God than ever, his pre-diſpoſed Mind will immediately be ſeized with ſuch a *ſtrong pathetick* ſenſe of both, as that he will not be able to withhold expreſſing and venting it in the moſt rapturous ſtrains of Admiration, and Praiſe, and Thankſgiving. And this will be his Buſineſs and Employment for ever, to admire and extoll the Perfections of God, of which he will every moment make new and glorious Diſcoveries; and to celebrate with grateful Acknowledgments the infinite Riches of his Bounty, of which we will every moment have freſh and ſweet Experiences. So that whilſt by continual Acts of Praiſe,

and

and Thanksgiving we endeavour to affect our Minds with a due sense of the Goodness and Bounty of God, we are practising before-hand the Musick of Heaven, and taking out the Songs of *Zion*; that so when we go from hence, we may be qualified and prepared to bear a part in the Celestial Choire. So that true Devotion (you see) which consists in a quick and lively sense of the infinite Majesty, Beauty and Benignity of God, doth most effectually dispose the Mind to all those Divine and Heavenly Exercises wherein the state of Heaven consists.

III. As we are Rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged to an unfeigned *love of*, and *complacency in* him. And that both upon the account of what he is in *himself*, as he is the most *lovely* and *amiable* of Beings, in whom there is an harmonious concurrence of all imaginable Beauties and Perfections, of Wisdom and Goodness, of Justice and Mercy, and every other amiable thing that can claim or attract a reasonable Affection, all which in infinite degrees are contempered together in his Nature: and also upon the account of his infinite Kindness and Beneficence to us. For besides that he hath compassed us round, like so many *fortunate Islands*, with a vast Ocean of external Blessings, in which there is all that is either *necessary*, *convenient* or *pleasant* for our bodily use and enjoyment; besides that he hath inspired us with immortal Minds, and stamped them with those fair impresses of his own Divinity, the knowledge of Truth, and the love of Goodness, which are both of them very forward capacities of the highest Perfection, and most exalted

exalted Happineſs: In a word, beſides that to ſupply and gratifie theſe our noble Capacities, he hath prepared for us an immmortal Heaven, and furniſh'd it with all the Pleaſures and Delights that a Heaven-born Mind can deſire or enjoy; beſides all this, I ſay, he hath ſent his own Son from Heaven to reveal to us the Way thither, and to encourage us to return into it, by dying for our Sins, and thereby obtaining for us a publick Grant and Charter of Mercy and Pardon, upon Condition of our Return; yea, and as if all this were too little, he hath ſent his *Spirit* to us, in the room of his Son, to abide amongſt us, and as his *Vicegerent* to drive on this vaſt deſign of his Love to us, to excite and perſuade us to return into that ſure Way to Heaven, which he hath deſcribed to us, and to aſſiſt us all along in our travel thither. So wondrous careful hath he been, not to be defeated of this his kind intention to make us everlaſtingly happy. And now what Heart can be ſo *hard* and *impenitrable* as to reſiſt ſuch powerful *Charms* and *Endearments!* Methinks, if we had but the common Senſe and Ingenuity of Men in us, it would be impoſſible for us to reflect upon ſuch miracles of Beauty and Love, without being intimately *touched* and *affected* with them. But till we are ſo, it will be impoſſible for us to enjoy Heaven: For how can we freely exert our Faculties upon an Object that we do not *love*; and if we cannot, how can we, without *loving* God, enjoy Heaven; which conſiſts in the free and chearful outgoings of all our Faculties upon him? For if when we go into Eternity we *love* him not, either he will be *indifferent*, or *hateful* to us; if the

the *former*, we shall altogether neglect and take no notice of him; if the *latter*, we shall either flie away from him, and banish our selves from his Presence, or be forced to abide and endure it with extreme Regret and Torment. For whilst our Minds are *averse* and *repugnant* to him, whatsoever we see in him will but the more enrage and canker our malice against him; and even the sight of those his glorious Perfections, which so enravish the Hearts of the blessed Inhabitants of Heaven, will only provoke and boil up our dislike of him to a higher degree of Hatred and Aversation. For so we find by experience, in this life, that while our Minds are *unreconciled* to God, it is a *Penance* to us to come near him, to admit any Thoughts of, or Conversation with him. And this is the reason why we take so much Pains as we do to misrepresent him to our selves, to draw such Pictures and Idea's of him upon our Minds, as best correspond with our own Tempers; that so having thus transform'd our Notion of him into the Image of our selves, *Narcissus*-like, we may fall in love with him, or at least more easily endure his blessed Presence and Conversation. When therefore we shall go into the other World, where all these Disguises of the Divine Idea shall be taken off, and *we shall see him as he is*, circled about with his own Rays of unstained and immaculate Glory, we shall never be able to *abide* him; but being all *affrighted* and *confounded* at the Glory of his Presence, we shall be forced to *run away*, and, if possible, to *hide* our selves from him in everlasting *Darkness* and *Despair*. For our Wills being poison'd and infected with an habitual

Enmity

Enmity againſt him, it muſt needs be torment to us to *ſee* him, becauſe we muſt always ſee him *happy*; which is ſo great an *eye-ſore* to thoſe damned Spirits that hate him, that I am apt to think, that, next to being delivered out of their own *Miſery*, the chiefeſt Good they deſire or wiſh for, is, to be delivered from the tormenting Senſe of his *Happineſs*. For what greater torment can our Mind endure, than to be an everlaſting Spectator of the Bliſs and Happineſs of one whom it *hates?* How then will it fret and gall our *meagre* and *envious* Spirits, to ſee that Bleſſed Being whom we cannot endure, ſurrounded with an infinite Happineſs; with a Happineſs ſo *vaſt*, as that it can admit of no *Encreaſe*, and yet ſo *ſecure*, as that it can never ſuffer a *Diminution?* So that 'tis impoſſible, you ſee, for the Mind of Man to live happily upon God in the other life, unleſs it be inſpired before-hand, with an hearty *Love* and *Affection* to him.

And hence it is that our holy Religion doth ſo ſtrictly require us *to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our mind*, Matt. xxii. 37. *to love him, becauſe he loved us firſt*; *to delight our ſelves in the Lord*, Pſal. xxxvii. 4. *and to rejoyce in the Lord*, Phil. iii. 1. *and to rejoyce in the Lord always*, Phil. iv. 4. *i. e.* to be habitually complacent or well pleaſed with the infinite Beauty, Goodneſs and Perfection of the Divine Nature. Nay, of ſuch vaſt import is the Love of God in the account of the Goſpel, that 'tis there recommended as the proper Principle of Chriſtian Life. For ſo, *Rom.* xiii. 10. we are told, that *love is the fulfilling of the Law*; that is, the adequate Principle

Principle of all Christian Obedience; and *Gal.* v. 6. we are told, that *neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing in Christ Jesus, but faith which worketh by love*; that is, there is nothing of any account with Christ, but such a Belief of the Gospel as begets in us a hearty Love to God, and doth thereby work and exert it self, as by that which is the only genuine Principle of Christian Life and Action. 'Tis true, beside this Principle of Love, the Gospel acts us both by our Fear and Hope, exciting the one by Threatnings of the greatest Evils, and animating the other with Promises of the greatest Goods; but yet it is certain, that neither *these*, nor *any other* Principles of Religious Action can be acceptable to God, whilst they are totally separated from Love to him. For there is no Principle of Obedience can be acceptable to God, that is not a Principle of Universal Obedience; but to *love* God, being a great and main instance of Obedience, that can be no Principle of Universal Obedience, which doth not effectually excite us to *love* him.

'Tis true, the Religion of most Men begins upon the Principles of Hope and Fear, and it cannot be denied but these are good *Beginnings*; but yet till by these we are excited to *love* God, as well as to do the other Parts of our Duty, our Obedience is *lame* and *partial*, and consequently *unacceptable*. So that though Hope and Fear are good *Ingredients* to compound an acceptable Principle of Obedience, yet without an *Intermixture* of Love they are by no means sufficient. There may be, indeed, and at first there generally is, much

much leſs of Love in this internal ſpring of our Obedience than of Hope or Fear, whilſt yet the whole *Compoſition* is truly pleaſing and acceptable to God. For the loweſt degree of cordial Love intermixed with our Hope and Fear, is ſufficient to *leaven* and *conſecrate* them into an acceptable Principle of Obedience; but ſtill the leſs of Love there is in it, the more *weak*, and *languid*, and *imperfect* it is; and in all its progreſſes towards Perfection, its *ripeneſs* and *maturity* is to be meaſured by the degrees of Love that are in it. And till our Love is arrived to that degree of Fervour and Ardency, as to become the *predominant Motive* and *Maſter-Ingredient* of this our compounded Principle of Obedience, our ſtate in Goodneſs is very *low* and *imperfect*. So that, in ſhort, the Principle that acts and moves us in Religion, is ſtill more and more perfect, the *more* of Love there is in it, and the *leſs* of Hope and Fear; and when Hope and Fear are both ſwallowed up in Love, and this is become the ſole ſpring of Action in us, then 'tis the *Principle* of Heaven, the *Soul* that acts and animates the Religion of *juſt men made perfect*.

So that if ever we deſign to grow up to *their* bleſſed State, we muſt endeavour to *kindle* and *blow up* the Love of God in our Hearts. And in order hereunto, we muſt be frequently repreſenting to our own Minds, the infinite Reaſons we have to *love* him, and preſſing our ſelves with the vaſt Obligations he hath laid upon us; ſpreading them fairly before our Thoughts in all their *endearing* Circumſtances. We muſt ever and anon ſet our *cold* and *frozen* Souls before thoſe *melting*

Flames of his Love and Beauty, and never leave *chafing* them at 'em, *urging* and *pressing* them with the Consideration of them, till we feel the heavenly Fire begin to *kindle* in our Bosoms. And above all things, we must take care, by the constant Practice of what is agreeable to God's Nature, to *reconcile* our Minds and Tempers to him; for till this is done, we can never be habitually *pleased* or *delighted* in him; but when once, by the Practice of those Eternal Rules of Goodness that are founded in his blessed Nature, we have so far reconciled our Natures to him, as that *our* Hearts and *his* stand *bent* the same way, and are for the main alike *enclined* and *disposed*, then we are prepared for, and made proper and convenient *Fuel* to receive this heavenly *Flame* of Love to him; and when this is once so throughly *kindled* in our Hearts, as that we are habitually *well pleased* and *delighted* in him, so as to *rejoyce* in his Happiness, *acquiesce* in his Will, and *meditate* on his Beauty and Goodness, with an unfeigned *complacency* of Soul, we are then in the same State (that is, in Kind, though not in Degree) with the blessed People of Heaven. And though in this Life we may not be able to raise our selves to that Height of Love as we *desire*, and much less as that blessed Object *deserves*, our present Knowledge being *short*, our Thoughts *unsteady*, and our Affections *entangled* in Sense and sensual things; yet when we go from hence into the other World, and are there admitted to a more intimate View of his Nature, Works and Perfections, our imperfect Love will be immediately improved into an high Seraphick Flame. For now we shall not only

know

know him better, having him always in our View, and continually ſhining full in our Eyes; but we ſhall be removed from all other Objects that are apt to divert our *Thoughts*, and divide our *Affections* from him. So that now our Love being kindled and fed with the pureſt Light, with the ever out-ſtreaming Rays of the moſt perfect Beauty and Goodneſs, will always exert its utmoſt Vigour, and ſpend it ſelf without Decay in one continued everlaſting Rapture.

And then how unconceivably Happy will our State be, when we ſhall always live in *view* of the moſt *lovely* Object, and always *love* him as much as we *are able*, and *be able* to *love* him a thouſand times more than we can now *imagine!* For the longer we *view*, the more we ſhall *know* him; and the more we *know*, the better we ſhall *love* him; and ſo through everlaſting Ages our Love ſhall be *ſtretching* and *extending* it ſelf upon his infinite Beauty and Lovelineſs. Now Love is naturally a moſt *ſweet* and *grateful* Paſſion, a Paſſion that *ſooths* and *raviſhes* the Heart, and puts the Spirits into a *brisk* and *generous* motion. For it wholly conſiſts in a fixed *complacency* or *well-pleaſed* of Mind, ariſing from the apprehended Goodneſs and Congruity of the thing beloved; and it is meerly by accident that it hath any *diſquieting* or *ungrateful* Emotion mingled with it. Either the Perſon beloved is *abſent*, which fills it with *unquiet Deſire*; or he is *unhappy*, or *unkind*, which mingles it with *Grief* and *Sorrow*; or he is *fickle* and *inconſtant*, which imbitters it with *Rage* and *Jealouſie*; but conſider it ſeparately from all theſe Accidents, and it is nothing but pure *Delight* and

Complacency. But now in Heaven our Love of God will have none of theſe *diſquieting* Accidents attending it; for there he will never be *abſent* from us, but continually entertaining our amorous Minds with the Proſpect of his infinite Beauties; there we ſhall ever *feel* his Love to us in the moſt *ſenſible* and *endearing* Effects, even in the Glory of that Crown which he will ſet upon our Heads, and in the raviſhing ſweetneſs of thoſe Joys he will infuſe into our Hearts; there we ſhall experience the *continuation* of his Love, in the continued Fruition of all that an everlaſting Heaven means, and be convinced as well by the Perpetuity of his Goodneſs to us, as by the Immutability of his Nature, that he is an *unchangeable* Lover: In a word, there we ſhall find him a moſt happy Being, *happy* beyond the vaſteſt wiſhes of our Love, ſo that we ſhall not only *delight* in him as he is infinitely *lovely* and *amiable*, but *rejoyce* and *triumph* in him too as he is infinitely *bleſſed* and *happy*. For Love unites the *Intereſts* as well as the *Hearts* of Lovers, and mutually appropriates to each, each others Joys and Felicities. So that in that bleſſed State we ſhall ſhare in the Felicity of God, proportionably to the Degree of our Love to him. For the more we love him, the more we ſhall ſtill *eſpouſe* his happy Intereſt; and the more we are *intereſted* in his Happineſs, the happier we muſt be, and the more we muſt enjoy of it. Thus Love gives us a real Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of God; it makes us Co-partners with him in himſelf, and derives his Happineſs upon us, and makes it as really *ours* as *his*. So that God's Happineſs is, as it were, the common *Bank* and Treaſury of all divine

divine Lovers, in which they have every one a *Share*, and of which, proportionably to the Degrees of their Love to him, they do actually *participate* to all Eternity. And could they but love him as much as he *deſerves*, that is, *infinitely*, they would be as *infinitely* bleſſed and happy as *he*. For then all *his* Happineſs would be *theirs*; and they would have the ſame delightful ſenſe and feeling of it all, as if it were all tranſplanted into their own Boſoms. God therefore being an infinitely *lovely*, infinitely *loving*, and infinitely *happy* Being, when once we are admitted to dwell for ever in his bleſſed Preſence, our Love to him can be productive of none but *ſweet* and *raviſhing* Emotions; for the immenſe Perfections it will then find in its Object, muſt neceſſarily refine it from all thoſe Fears and Jealouſies, Griefs and Diſpleaſures that are mingled with our *carnal* Loves, and render it a pure *Delight* and *Complacency*. So that when once it is grown up to the Perfection of the Heavenly State, 'twill be all Heaven, 'twill be an eternal Paradiſe of Delights within us, a living Spring whence Rivers of Pleaſures will iſſue for evermore. O bleſſed State, in which my Heart ſhall be brim-full of Love, and my Love ſhall triumph alone with me, and be all Joy and Raviſhment, being removed for ever out of the Noiſe and Neighbourhood of all thoſe diſquieting Affections which here are wont to mingle with, and continually diſturb and incommode it!

IV. As we are Rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged attentively to *imitate* him in all his imitable Perfections and Actions. For this

is an allowed Maxim, *Perfectiſſimum in ſuo genere eſt menſura reliquorum*; that is, That which is moſt Perfect in its kind, is to be the Rule and Meaſure of all thoſe Individual natures that are contained under it. For *Perfection* is the meaſure of *Imperfection*, even as a ſtrait Line is of a crooked; and every Individual of a kind muſt needs be ſo far *defective* in its nature, as it *falls ſhort* of that which is moſt *perfect* in its kind. God therefore being the moſt Perfect of all in the whole kind of Reaſonable Beings, muſt needs be the Supreme Pattern of all thoſe Individuals that are under him; and ſo far as any of them *diſagree* with him, ſo far they are *defective* in their Natures. ἀρχέτυπος φύσεως λογικῆς ὁ θεός ἐστι, μίμημα δὲ καὶ ἀπεικόνισμα ἄνθρωπος, *Phil. lib.* 2. *pag.* 132. *i. e.* God is the Archetype of every Reaſonable Nature, and Man is his Imitation and Image. For he is a Being that is infinitely Reaſonable in all his Volitions and Actions, that hath not the leaſt intermixture either of Humour, or Folly or Prejudice in his Choices, but is always, and in every thing governed by his own Pure and All-comprehending Wiſdom. Upon which account he ought to be owned and looked upon by every Reaſonable Being, as the Sovereign Standard and Pattern of their Natures; and ſo far as any Reaſonable Nature moves or acts *counter* to his, which is the moſt *perfectly* reaſonable, ſo far it ought to be looked upon as *monſtrous* and *unnatural* in its kind. For as it is monſtrous in a Humane Body to have its Parts diſplaced, its Mouth opened in its Belly, or its Legs growing out of its Shoulders, becauſe theſe are unnatural Poſitions, that are directly contrary

contrary to the true Idea, Form and Figure of a humane Body; ſo every reaſonable Nature that doth not *imitate* and *take after* God's, but chuſeth and acts contrary to him, is ſo far monſtrous and mis-ſhapen, becauſe 'tis *writhed* and *diſtorted* into a Figure that is directly contrary to its natural Pattern and Exemplar. And while it continues ſo, it is not capable of true Happineſs. For that which renders God ſo infinitely happy in himſelf, is not ſo much the Almighty Power he hath to defend himſelf from foreign Hurts and Injuries, as the exact Agreement of all his Motions and Actions, with the all-comprehending Reaſon of his own Mind. For he alway ſees what is beſt; and what he ſees is beſt, he always *chuſes* and *affects*; and this makes him perfectly ſatisfied with himſelf, and fills him with infinite Joy and Complacency; becauſe whenever he ſurveys himſelf in the glorious Mirrour of his own Mind, he diſcerns nothing in himſelf but what is infinitely *lovely*, nothing but what exactly correſponds with the *faireſt Idea's* of his own infinite Reaſon. Whereas if, upon an impoſſible Suppoſal, it were otherwiſe, there would ariſe a *Civil War* within his own Boſom, againſt which *Omnipotence* it ſelf could not *protect* or *defend* him. For in deſpight of himſelf he would be continually expoſed to the juſt *reproaches* of his own Mind, and his own All-ſeeing Eye would every moment *detect*, and *libel*, and *upbraid* him, and render him a moſt *inglorious* Spectacle to himſelf. So that he would be ſo far from being infinitely *pleaſed* and *ſatisfied* with himſelf, that his own infallible Reaſon would be an everlaſting *vexation* to him.

And ſo will ours be to us, unleſs we take care to *imitate* God in thoſe his Divine Perfections, from whence his infinite *Self-ſatisfaction* ariſes. For ſo long as we are conſcious to our ſelves, that we wilfully *ſwerve* and *deviate* from the great Exemplar of our Rational Natures, we cannot but be *aſhamed of* and *condemn* our ſelves, and be highly *diſſatisfied* with our own Actions. Our Conſcience muſt neceſſarily *reproach* our Will, and our Reaſon *upbraid* our baſe Inclinations. Now what an intolerable plague is it, for a Man to be forced to make *Invectives* againſt himſelf, and continually to carry his own *Satyrs* in his boſom? In this life, indeed, what by *diſguiſing* our Faults with ſpecious Names, or *colouring* them over with plauſible Pretences; what by *bribing* our Conſciences with falſe Preſumptions, or *diverting* our ſelves from liſtning to their reproaches by hurrying into Vice or Buſineſs, we may happily make a ſhift to deal well enough with our ſelves. But alas! what ſhall we do when we come into the other World, where all fair Colour and Pretence ſhall be *wiped off*, and our Vices and We ſhall appear to our ſelves in our own *naked* and *undiſguiſed* Uglineſs; where all our falſe Preſumption ſhall be *baffled* by a woful Experience, and all the din of worldly Pleaſure and Buſineſs, in which we were wont to drown the clamours of our Conſcience, ſhall be for ever *ſilenced*; ſo that we ſhall be expoſed without Fence or Guard to the furious Reflections of our own Mind, and lie ſtark naked under the laſh of an enraged Conſcience for ever! O good God! what Tongue can expreſs the intolerable Anguiſh of ſuch a State, wherein our own

own Deformities ſhall be continually objected to our Eyes, and we ſhall have nothing to palliate or excuſe them, but be always forced to *condemn*, and *hate*, and *curſe* our ſelves for them, and yet not be able to *correct* and *reform* them; wherein we ſhall ſtill be hurried on to ſuch Actions by our own furious Inclinations, as, when we have done them, will *ſtartle* and *amaze* us, ſet on our Reaſon and Conſcience to *worry* us with their reproachful Reflections, yet in deſpite of all their Reproaches we ſhall ſtill *reiterate* and *repeat* them! Like a deſperate Murderer, who having killed an innocent Perſon, reflects with *Horrour* upon his own Act, *tears* his Hair, *beats* his Breaſt, *curſes* and calls himſelf a thouſand Villains: but being hereby chafed into a greater Fury, inſtead of *reforming* grows more *miſchievous*, and ſo murthers another, and then *rages* afreſh; but ſtill the more he *rages*, the more he *murthers*. And this will neceſſarily be our State in the other World, if, through our neglect of *imitating* God, we go away thither under an habitual contrariety of Nature to him. Beſides that we ſhall be wholly indiſpoſed to thoſe beatifical Acts of Divine Love, Worſhip and Contemplation, in which, as I have ſhewed, a great part of the Pleaſure of Heaven conſiſts. For ſince all Love is founded in Likeneſs, and Likeneſs is the effect of Imitation, how is it poſſible we ſhould love God, unleſs we imitate him; and if we do not love him, what Pleaſure can we take in contemplating and adoring him?

Wherefore in proſecution of its great Deſign, which is to make us happy, the Goſpel ſtrictly

strictly requires us to be alway *imitating*, so far as they are imitable, the Perfections and Actions of our heavenly Father; to endeavour to *form* our Natures to his, to *rectifie* the Features and Lineaments of our Souls by his most amiable Idea; to be continually *framing* our Tempers by the noble Pattern of his Mercy and Goodness, his Justice, Purity, and Wisdom; that so being *new-cast*, as it were, in the perfect Mould of his Nature, we may be *transformed* into living Images of him: So *Ephes.* v. 1. *Be ye therefore* μιμηταὶ, *imitators*, or *followers of God, as dear children*; *i. e.* that so you may resemble him in the Qualities of your Minds, as Children do their Parents in the Lineaments of their Bodies. And this is the sense of all those Evangelical Injunctions which require us *to be pure as God is pure, merciful as he is merciful*, and *perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*; that is, to take example by God in the whole course of our lives, and trace and follow him in all his imitable Perfections, by *putting on that new, that god-like man*, that divine temper and disposition, *which after God*, that is, according to the pattern of his Nature, *is created in righteousness and true holiness*, *Ephes.* iv. 24. This therefore is an essential part of our *Christian Life*, to set God always before our Eyes, as the great Pattern of our Lives and Actions, and to endeavour constantly to write after him, and transcribe his Graces into our Natures; that so when we go away into the other World, we may carry with us, at least, a rude and imperfect draught of his blessed Image upon our Minds, such as when we are removed from the manifold impediments of flesh and blood, and the perpetual

perpetual diverſions of this ſenſible World, and admitted to a nearer view of God, may be a prevailing byaſs upon our Wills, and encline us to imitate him for ever. For if for the main we are here transformed by imitating God into a *Godlike* Temper and Diſpoſition, all thoſe *involuntary contrarieties* to him, which by reaſon of our Ignorance of his Nature, of our Bodily Temper, and the manifold Temptations we are here expoſed to, are ſtill remaining in our Natures, will be immediately extinguiſhed, upon our arrival into the other World; where being freed from all our *miſconceptions* of God, from all the *repugnancies* of our bodily Temper to him, and from all thoſe *Temptations* that were wont to avert us from him, we ſhall have no *involuntary* Diſpoſition or Inclination in us; and then our Wills being already predominantly enclined to follow God, and take example by him, and having no contrary inclination to contend with, we ſhall preſently *attend to* and *imitate* his Perfections with the greateſt Vigour, Freedom, and Alacrity of Soul. So that now we ſhall be ſo *intenſely* fixed to chuſe and act like God, who is the Example and Pattern of our Natures, that we ſhall everlaſtingly regulate all our Motions by thoſe very eternal Laws of Reaſon, whereby he everlaſtingly wills and acts; and there is nothing will be ſo abhorrent to our Natures as an *ungodlike* Will or Action. For if, as the Apoſtle tells us, *by beholding now the glory of God in a glaſs, we are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. then doubtleſs much more ſhall we be ſo, when we behold him *face to face*. 'Tis true, as our *Knowledge* of God, who is an

an infinite *Truth*, can never be *abſolutely perfect*, becauſe if it were, it would be an *infinite* Knowledge; ſo neither can our *Reſemblance* of him be, who is an infinite *Goodneſs*, becauſe if it were, we ſhould be *infinitely* Good; both which are Contradictions to the ſtate of a Creature: yet as we ſhall be *knowing* him farther and farther, ſo proportionably we ſhall be *imitating* him too through infinite Ages of Duration; and ſtill every act of our Imitation ſhall be ſo *attentive* and *vigorous*, that it ſhall leave a further impreſſion of his infinite Perfection on our Natures. So that though our *finite* Nature can never arrive to a *perfect* Likeneſs of that infinitely lovely and amiable Being, becauſe it can never be *infinitely* amiable; yet it ſhall be everlaſtingly *approaching* nearer and nearer to him, proportionably as it diſcovers more and more of his infinite Beauty and Amabilities, and be ſtill growing more *wiſe* and *pure*, more *righteous* and *benign*, according as its proſpect of the *Wiſdom*, *Purity*, *Juſtice*, and *Goodneſs* of his Nature is enlarged and extended. So that as his Beauty ſhines into us, it will ſtill imprint it ſelf upon us, and transform us into bleſſed Images of it ſelf; and then according as we are aſſimilated to the Divine Nature, we ſhall ſtill partake of thoſe Joys and Pleaſures which are inſeparable to it, and reſemble it in Bliſs as much as we do in Perfection. For as God's *infinite* Perfection is the ſpring of his *infinite* Self-ſatisfaction, ſo from our *finite* Perfection there ſhall ever redound to us a Satisfaction equal to our *finite* Capacities. For though we ſhall never attain to *abſolute* Perfection, that is, to all the *poſſible Degrees* of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, which

which is the Peculiar of God; yet to Eternity we ſhall be *growing on* to it, and in every Period of our growth we ſhall be perfectly what we *ought to be*, that is, we ſhall ever *know* as much of God as is poſſible for us, our preſent State and Circumſtances conſidered; and ſo far as we *know* of him, we ſhall to our utmoſt power continually *imitate* and *reſemble* him. And thus in our Eternal Race to Perfection, our Wills ſhall always follow our Underſtanding, and our Underſtandings ſhall always follow God with their utmoſt Vigour and Activity; ſo that neither the *one* nor the *other* ſhall ever be deficient of any Degree of Knowledge and Goodneſs which *pro hic & nunc* is poſſible to them.

Now what an unſpeakable Satisfaction muſt this give to the Mind, when ſurveying it ſelf round about, it ſhall find every thing within it ſelf exactly as it *ought to be*; every Faculty, to its utmoſt Power and Capacity, perfectly *correſponding* with its original Pattern and Exemplar; when upon the ſtricteſt Scrutiny it will diſcover nothing within it ſelf, but what the moſt *critical* Conſcience will be forced to approve of; no Motion or Action, but what will endure the Teſt of its *ſevereſt* Reaſon: In a word, when it ſhall interchangeably turn its Eyes from God to it ſelf, and compare Grace with Grace, and Feature with Feature, and perceive what an amiable Conſent and Agreement there is between its own *Copy* and his fair *Original*; what a pure *Imitation* of God its Life is, and how exactly *Deiform* all its Motions and Actions are: when, I ſay, our bleſſed Minds ſhall always find themſelves in this *God-like* Poſture and

and Condition, O! what incomparable Content and Satisfaction will they take in themſelves! With what enraviſhing Pleaſure will they ever review their own Motions, which being immediately copied from the Nature of God, will be ſuch as its ſevereſt Reaſon will be always forced to commend and approve of! So that now the happy Mind will be always *triumphing* in its own Purity, and enjoy within it ſelf an Everlaſting Heaven of Content and Peace; now 'twill continually be *crowned* with the Applauſes of its own Reaſon, and all its Actions will have the joyful *Echo's* of a well-pleaſed Conſcience continually reſounding after them. And thus by imitating God's *Perfections*, we ſhall imitate his *Happineſs* too, and ſhall for ever *take after* him, not only in reſpect of the Rectitude of our Natures, but alſo in the moſt bleſſed and comfortable Enjoyment of our ſelves. Beſides that, our Reſemblance of God will everlaſtingly diſpoſe us to *love*, and our Love to *contemplate* and *adore* him. For all theſe bleſſed Acts do reciprocally further and promote each other; juſt like contiguous Bodies that are placed in a Circle, the firſt of which being moved, thruſts on the ſecond, the ſecond the third, the third the laſt, if there be no more between; and then the laſt thruſt on the firſt, and ſo round again in the ſame order. So that if we carry with us into Eternity a Frame and Diſpoſition of Nature like Gods, we ſhall always ſo *imitate* as ſtill to *love* him, ſo *love* as ſtill to *contemplate* him, ſo *contemplate* as ſtill to *adore* him, ſo *adore* as ſtill to *imitate*, and *love* and *contemplate* him a-new; and in this bleſſed Circle we ſhall move round

round for ever, with unſpeakable Vigour and Alacrity.

V. As we are Reaſonable Creatures related to *God*, we are bound to *reſign up*, and *ſubmit* our ſelves to his bleſſed Will and Diſpoſal. For God hath a juſt Dominion over All, founded in his own infinite Power, that doth not, like other Dominions, reſult to him from any external Acts or Atchievements, but is the eternal Prerogative of his own Nature. For he, as well as all other Beings, hath a freedom to exerciſe his own Abilities ſo far as it is *juſt* and *lawful*; but being infinitely paramount to all other Powers whatſoever, he can be ſubject to no *ſuperiour* Authority, nor conſequently be obliged by any *other* Law but that of his own Nature. So that whatſoever he *can* do, he can *juſtly* do, if it be not contrary to the infinite Perfections of his Nature. For his Power being infinite and unconfined, as well as his Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs, doth ſufficiently warrant him to do whatſoever is conſiſtent with *them*; otherwiſe he would be infinitely Powerful in vain. And therefore ſince he *can* exerciſe a Dominion over All, he muſt needs have an eternal Right to do it, ſo far as his own Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Juſtice will permit, which are the only Laws by which he can be *bounded* in the exerciſe of his infinite Power and Ability. So that while he governs us by ſuch Rules and Laws as are convenient to his own Nature, his own Greatneſs and Power, which exalts him above all other Law or Authority, ſufficiently warrants him ſo to do. And being thus *rightfully* enthroned by the infinite Pre-eminence of his own Power and Majeſty,

jeſty, all other Beings, ſo far as they are capable, ſtand immutably obliged to *ſubmit* and *reſign* themſelves up to his Government.

But beſides that we are obliged to him as he is *God*, we are alſo bound to him as he is our *Creator*. For there is always a Power acquired by *Benefits*, where there is none *antecedently*; eſpecially where the Benefit conferr'd is no leſs than that of our Being, which is the caſe between us and God. And this is ſuch a Benefit as is ſufficient to entitle him to us, by an *abſolute* and *unalienable* Propriety, though he had no *antecedent* Right of Dominion over us by virtue of his own infinite Greatneſs. So that though before he created us, or any other Being, he had free Power to act any thing that lay within the compaſs of *juſt* and *lawful*, which *juſt* and *lawful* was not definable by any other Law but that of his own Nature; and though ſince his Creation his Power is no more, (ſo that he hath not acquired to himſelf any new *Power* by creating us, but only made new *Subjects* whereon to exerciſe that ancient Power and Dominion which was eternally inherent in him) yet doubtleſs by giving us our Beings, he hath laid *new* Obligations upon us to obey him. For now *deriving* our ſelves, as we do, from him, we are bound by all the ties of Equity and Juſtice to *render back* our ſelves to him, and to ſubmit thoſe Powers to his Dominion, which are the effects and off-ſpring of his Bounty. For what can be more juſt and equal, than that *that* Will which is the *Cauſe* of our Beings, ſhould be the *Law* and *Rule* of our Actions; than that we ſhould ſerve him with thoſe Powers we derived from him, and render

render him back the fruits of his own Plantation? For now we are not *our own*, but *God*'s, and He alone hath power to diſpoſe of us; and whenſoever we diſpoſe of our ſelves contrary to his Will and Pleaſure, we do not only *invade* his Property, but employ the ſpoils of it *againſt* him. And whilſt we continue thus doing, it is poſſible we ſhould ever be happy. For beſides that, while we continue in Rebellion againſt him, we are in an actual Confederacy with Hell; for ſo when we are told, that *Rebellion is as the ſin of Witchcraft*, that is, Rebellion againſt God; the meaning is, that, like Witches, we are in League with the Devil, and are liſted Voluntiers under thoſe infernal Powers, who, for blowing the Trumpet of Rebellion in Heaven, were baniſhed thence ſix thouſand years ago, and have ever ſince been raiſing Forces in this lower World, againſt God; ſo that whilſt we continue with them in Defiance to God, we are in the Devil's Muſter-Roll, who is Captain-General of all the revolted Legions, and ſo are of the quite oppoſite Party to the Loyal People of Heaven, and conſequently can never hope, while we continue ſuch, to be admitted to their Society and Happineſs; beſides all this, I ſay, Rebellion againſt God, doth naturally draw a Hell of Miſeries after it. For it cannot be ſuppoſed that the Wiſe Sovereign of the World ſhould be ſo unconcerned for his own Authority, as to ſuffer his Creatures to *ſpurn at* and *affront* it, without ever manifeſting his Diſpleaſure againſt them in ſome *dire* and *ſenſible* Effects. And therefore though in this Life, which is the time of our Trial and Probation, he mercifully

forbears to *lead us to Repentance*; yet if we leave this Life with our Wills *unsubdued* and *unresigned* to him, we must not expect to be thus gently dealt with in the other. For it is as easie for him who is the Father of our Spirits, to correct our Spirits, as 'tis for the Parents of our Flesh to correct our Flesh. And though our Souls are no more impressible with *material* stripes, than Sun-beams are with the blows of a Hammer; yet are they liable to have horrid and dismal *thoughts* impressed upon them, and to be as much aggrieved by *them*, as sensible Bodies are with the most exquisite Torments. So that if God be displeased with us, there is no doubt but he can *imprint* his Wrath upon our Minds, in black and ghastly thoughts, and cause it perpetually to *drop* like burning Sulphur on our Souls. And it being in his Power thus to lash our Spirits; to be sure, when once he is implacably incens'd against us, (as he will be in the other World, if we go Rebels thither) he will more or less let loose his Power upon us, and make us feel his wrathful Resentments, by infusing supernatural Horrours into our Souls, and scourging our guilty and defenceless Spirits with inspirations of dire and frightful Thoughts. Now though this be not a *natural* and *necessary* Effect of our Rebellion against God, because it depends upon his Will who is a Free Agent; yet considering that he is a *wise* Agent, and that as such it is necessary he should one way or other manifest his Displeasure against such as are unreclaimable Rebels to his Authority, it is *next* to a natural one; and at least the fearful Expectation of it in such rebellious Spirits (which is a misery next to the enduring it)

it) is *neceſſary* and *unavoidable*. For God hath imprinted a dread of his own Power and Majeſty ſo deeply on our Natures, that we are not able, with all our arts of Self-deceit, wholly to *obliterate* and *deface* it; and though in this life we may ſometimes *ſuppreſs* and *ſtupifie* our Senſe of God; yet even *here*, in deſpite of our ſelves, 'twill ever and anon *return* upon us. And if when we have done what we know is offenſive to that Inviſible Majeſty we ſtand in awe of, we do not ſuffer our ſelves ſeriouſly to *reflect* upon it, there preſently ariſes in our Minds a ſwarm of horrid Thoughts, and *diſmal* Expectations; and if in this preſent State in which we have ſo many Salvo's for our wounded Spirits, ſo many Pleaſures and Self-deluſions to charm our natural dread of God, our over-charged Conſciences do notwithſtanding ſo often *recoil* upon us, and alarm us with ſuch diſmal abodings; what will they do hereafter, when all thoſe Pleaſures are *removed*, and all thoſe Self-deluſions *baffled* with which we were wont to ſooth and divert them. Then doubtleſs we ſhall be continually ſtung with ſharp and dire Reflections, and our Conſciences, like tragick Scenes, be all hung round with the Enſigns of Horrour; then ſhall the dread of God perpetually haunt us like a grim Fury, and the terrour of his offended Majeſty ſtrike us into an everlaſting Trembling and Agony. For ſo St. *James* tells us, that *the Devils themſelves do believe and tremble*, Jam. ii. 19. they believe that there is an Almighty Being above them, and are conſcious that they are in actual Rebellion againſt him, which makes them horribly afraid of his Vengeance; and yet ſuch is

the inveterate deviliſhneſs of their Natures, that they will by no means hearken to a Submiſſion, but in deſpite of their own Dread and Horrour, do ſtill perſiſt in an open Defiance to their Almighty Enemy, and ſo tremble and ſin, and ſin and tremble for ever. And ſo ſhall we, if we go into the other World habitual Rebels to God; our deep and inveterate malice againſt him will ſtill hurry us on to *incenſe* and *provoke* him, and then our natural *Dread* of his Power and Majeſty will break into *frightful* and *horrible* Thoughts, and ſo be continually revenging upon us thoſe our continual Provocations of him. For then our Soul will be nakedly expoſed to the laſh of its own *furious* thoughts, and have no ſhield to defend it ſelf againſt the terrors of its *guilty* Conſcience, which being rouzed up and kept awake by the *unintermitting* ſenſe of our miſery, will be always *clamouring* upon us, and continually *torturing* us with black and horrid Reflections. So that whilſt we are wandring among *wretched* Ghoſts, through thoſe *diſmal* ſhades below, we ſhall be perpetually meditating *Horrours*, and never leave laſhing our ſelves with our own *ſharp* and *terrible* thoughts, till we have chafed our ſelves into *Furies*, and boiled up our ſelf-condemning Rage into an everlaſting Madneſs. Thus as our ſenſe of our *unlikeneſs* to God will ever fill us with *Shame* and *Confuſion*, ſo will the ſenſe of our *Rebellion* againſt him continually ſtrike us into *Fear* and *Amazement*.

To prevent which, our holy Religion, which doth ſo induſtriouſly conſult our Happineſs, requires us now to *ſubmit our ſelves to God*, Jam. iv. 7.

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to live to God, Gal. ii. 19. *to preſent our ſelves living ſacrifices, holy and acceptable to God*, Rom. xii. 1. *to yield our ſelves unto God, and our members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God*, Rom. vi. 13. The ſence of all which, is, that we ſhould endeavour ſo to affect our Minds with the ſenſe of God's Authority over us, and with the manifold Reaſons of our Obedience to him, as to be firmly and conſtantly reſolved within our ſelves, neither to *chuſe* any thing that he *forbids*, nor to *refuſe* any thing that he *commands*; that we ſhould ſet him up a Throne in our Hearts, a *fix'd* and *prevailing* Reſolution of Obedience, that therein he may ſit and reign, and have the abſolute Empire and Command of all our inward Motions, and outward Actions; in a word, that we ſhould acquire ſuch an habitual Reſpect to, and Reverence of his Sovereign Authority, that no temptation from *within* or *without* us, may be able to countermand it, or to ſeduce us from our Duty into any wilful courſe of Rebellion againſt him. And when once we have framed our Minds into this obediential Temper, we are in a forward Preparation for Heaven. And though by reaſon of thoſe Remains and Reliques of corrupt Nature that are in us, which are here continually excited by the many Temptations among which we live, we may find *reluctant* and *counter-ſtriving* Principles within us; a *ſtubborn* Appetite contending againſt an *obedient* Will, and ſometimes upon *Surprize* or *Inadvertence* over-powering it; yet if we heartily *bewail* this as our Unhappineſs, and if when we thus fall, we *weep* and *riſe again*, and take *more* care of our ſteps for the future, we ſhall

carry with us when we go from hence into the other World, a Will that is habitually *reſigned* to God; and ſo being there removed from all the Temptations that were wont to excite in us thoſe contrary Appetites and Inclinations, we ſhall immediately become *all* Duty and Obedience, and freely give up our ſelves to God, without the leaſt ſhadow of *Conteſt* or *Reluctancy*. And in this bleſſed State we ſhall continue for ever, ſo *entirely* devoted to God, that between him and us there ſhall ever be one common Will, and End, and Intereſt; and our Hearts, which before were in a *great meaſure* ſet and tuned to the Heart of God, will be inſtantly ſuch *perfect Uniſons* with it, that whenſoever, or whatſoever he ſpeaks, we ſhall ſtill *reſound* and *echo* to him, from our inmoſt bowels, with unſpeakable Chearfulneſs and Alacrity.

And being thus reduced to a perfect *Submiſſion* to the Will of God, we ſhall therein find our ſelves incomparably happy. For now our Wills being always determined by the Will of God, we ſhall be perfectly eaſed of all the *Trouble* and *Diſtraction* of Chuſing. Now our Minds will no longer hover in *Suſpence*, nor be divided between *contrary* Reaſons, but all its thoughts will glide gently on in a calm and even Current, without ever being toſſed and bandied to and fro by *croſs* and *oppoſite* Deliberations. For now it no ſooner knows the Will of God, but it reſts in it immediately with a *free* Aſſent, and *uncontrolled* Approbation; ſo that upon *new* Occaſions it's free from the trouble of forming *new* Choices and Reſolutions, being already fix'd, under all Events, to one

ſteady

ſteady Courſe of Motion, and *immovably* reſolved whatever befalls, ever to do what God would have it. And its Will thus perfectly acquieſcing in God, as in its proper Place and Element, it will no longer diſpute as it was wont to do, no longer waver between two Loadſtones, but always obey upon the firſt Motion, and follow him for ever without Deliberation. In which happy ſtate we ſhall be no longer ground between thoſe *counter-moving* Millſtones, *the law in our Minds*, and *the law in our Members*; but being entirely *reſigned* to God, we ſhall ever obey him *ſecundo flumine*, with a full Current of Inclination, and Nature. And what a mighty Eaſe muſt this be to the Soul; eſpecially conſidering that by being thus entirely ſubject to God, it will not only be releaſed from the *Trouble* of Chuſing and Deliberating, but alſo throughly warranted of the *Goodneſs* and *Rectitude* of its own Choices. For ſo far as we are ſubject unto God, *our* Wills are *his*, and ſo are our Actions too; and whilſt they are ſo, we can have no reaſon to miſtruſt, either that they are *bad* in themſelves, or that he is *angry* and *diſpleaſed* at them. For his Will, we know, is governed by his Nature, which is the *Standard* of Good and Evil, the *Law* and *Meaſure* of Right or Wrong; ſo that while we *will* and *act* as he would have us, we have a ſufficient warrant for what we do; a warrant that will for ever *bear us out*, and *juſtifie* us to our own Minds, and always render us abundantly *ſatisfied* with our ſelves; ſo that we ſhall not only always *acquit*, but always *reverence* our ſelves; and our Conſcience will not only ceaſe to *ſhame* us, but be continually *applauding* and *ſmiling* upon

us, and instead of those importunate *Clamours* with which it was wont to entertain us, its constant echo to all our Actions will be, *Well done, good and profitable servant.* So that being entirely determined by the Will of God, which never varies from the Law of his Nature, we shall be perfectly *satisfied* with our selves, and for ever *chuse* and *act* without the least *Mistrust* or *Hesitance.* And then *our* Wills being perfectly subject to *his*, and all our Powers of Action entirely at his Devotion, we shall never have the least ground to fear or suspect his *Displeasure*, but be always fully satisfied that he *loves* us, that we are *dear* and *precious* in his Eyes, and that to Eternity he will *respect* and *look upon* us with the smiles of an unchangeable Complacency. The sense of which will ravish our Hearts, and for ever fill us *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* So that whereas rebellious Souls are perpetually haunted with two restless Furies, *viz.* the *shame* of their *guilt*, and the *fear* of their *danger*, which even here do give them more *disturbance*, than all their sins can *pleasure* and *delights*; when once we are perfectly *subjected* to God, we shall be for ever discharged of them *both*; and then will our happy Minds be always as *couragious* as Truth, and as *confident* as Innocence it self.

And as by our perfect *Submission* to God, we shall be wholly released from the *trouble* of chusing, and sufficiently warranted in our own *Choices*, so we shall be abundantly *satisfied* both of the Wisdom and Success of them. For then we shall be assured, even by a sweet and happy Experience, that whatsoever God commands us to

do,

do, he moſt certainly knows that it is for our good, and that *that* is the reaſon why he commands it. So that when we are entirely *ſubjected* to God, our Choices and Actions will be all directed by an Infallible Wiſdom to our own good. For while we chuſe what God would have us, our Wills are guided by God's Wiſdom; and ſo in every genuine Act of Obedience we are as *infallible* as Omniſcience it ſelf. When therefore we are perfectly *reſigned* to God, we ſhall always *will* and *act* with as much *Confidence* and *Aſſurance* of a happy and proſperous Succeſs, as if we our ſelves were infinitely wiſe, and had a perfect comprehenſion of all poſſible Iſſues and Events. And whilſt wretched Rebels grope about under the Conduct of their own blind Wills, and for the moſt part do they know not *what*, and go they know not *where* themſelves, but live by *chance*, and act at *random*; our Wills and Actions being wholly ſteered by an All-wiſe Will, that never fails to meaſure them by the beſt Rules, and point them to the beſt Ends, we ſhall be always ſure of our hands, and know infallibly before-hand that every thing we *will* or *do* ſhall conſpire to our own good. And this will enable us to perform the everlaſting Race of our Obedience, with an unſpeakable Freedom and Alacrity, and always render us wondrous light, and nimble, and expedite in our Operations. For whereas when Men know not what may happen upon ſuch an Action, and are not able to pry out all thoſe hidden Events that lurk in the Womb of their own Deſigns, they always act with *Caution* and *Anxiety*, and are *doubtful* and *tremulous* in their Motions; when once

once we are ſure of a good Event, we ſtill go on with Courage and Chearfulneſs; and ſo we ſhall ever do, when we ever perfectly *will* and *act* under the Command of God. For now we ſhall always ſee good Iſſues before us, and be firmly aſſured from that infallible Wiſdom which governs *his* Will, and by his *ours*, that every thing we Will or Do ſhall be crowned with a happy Effect. And this will for ever wing our Souls with an unwearied Vigour and Activity, and render each Act of our Obedience unſpeakably *ſweet* and *delightful* to us. And now, O bleſſed Mind! what Tongue or Thought can reach thy Happineſs; who living in a moſt perfect Subjection to an All-good and All-wiſe Will, art never in the leaſt concerned or troubled to *debate* and *deliberate* what to chuſe, but doſt everlaſtingly embrace and follow what an infinite Goodneſs and an infinite Wiſdom hath *choſen* for thee!

VI. As we are Reaſonable Creatures related to *God*, we are alſo obliged chearfully to *truſt in*, and *depend upon* him. For as he is the Prop and Center of all the mouldring Creation, the Almighty *Atlas*, that bears it upon his ſhoulders, and keeps it from ſinking into Ruine, we and every Creature in Heaven and Earth do hang upon him, and draw our breath from him; and if he ſhake us off but for a moment, we preſently drop into nothing, and periſh. For could we exiſt of our ſelves this *preſent* moment, we might as well have done ſo the moment *before*, and may as well do ſo the moment *after*, and ſo backwards and forward to all Eternity; and unleſs we had ſuch a Fulneſs of Eſſence in us, as to exiſt of our ſelves from

from all eternity paſt to all eternity to come, it is impoſſible we ſhould exiſt ſo much as one *moment* without new ſupplies from the infinite and independent Fountain of Being. And what can be more fit or reaſonable, than that we who are thus born up by him, ſhould freely *truſt in*, and *depend upon* him? than that we ſhould build our Hope upon the Prop of our Exiſtence, and make him the Stay of our Confidence *in whom we live and move, and have our being?* Eſpecially conſidering what a proper Object of Truſt and Dependence he is; and that not only as he is the Sovereign Diſpoſer of all thoſe Iſſues and Events which concern us, but alſo as he is infinitely Wiſe, and always underſtands what is *good* or *hurtful* to us, and as he ſtands engaged both by his own *eſſential* Goodneſs, and *free* Promiſe never to fail thoſe that put their Truſt in him, but to manage all their Affairs to their everlaſting Intereſt and Advantage. And in whom can we more rationally *conſide*, than in a Being of infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power? that always *knows* what is beſt for us, that always *wills* what he *knows* ſo, and always *does* what he *wills?* All which conſidered, it's certainly incomparably more to our Intereſt and Advantage, that our Concerns ſhould lie in his hands, and be managed as he ſees beſt, than that every thing ſhould happen to us according to our own Will and Deſire. For there are innumerable things which in the natural Series and Order of Cauſes are *concomitant* and *conſequent* to every Event, the greateſt part of which are out of the Sphere of our Cognizance; by reaſon of which it is impoſſible for us to make an infallible

infallible Judgment of the *good* or *evil* of any Event that befalls us; becauſe though we may be ſecure that ſuch an Event *ſingly* and *apart* by it ſelf may be *good* or *evil* for us, yet for all we know, there may be ſuch Concomitants or Conſequents inſeparable to it, as may quite alter its Nature, and render that *evil*, which conſidered *ſingly* may be good for us; or that *good*, which conſidered *ſingly* may be evil. We earneſtly wiſh for ſuch an Event, and are very confident it would be mighty advantageous to us: But alas! if *it* ſhould befall us, according to the Series of things a thouſand *others* muſt, and what they will prove we are not able to prognoſticate; but for all we know, the Miſchief of *them* may abundantly outweigh the Benefit of *this*. And this being ſo, how extremely unfit are we to make Choices for our ſelves, ſince in moſt particulars 'tis almoſt an equal lay whether what we chuſe will prove our *Food* or our *Poiſon?* But now God being the Supreme Orderer and Diſpoſer of Things, and having the *firſt* Link of every Chain of Cauſes in his own hands, muſt needs have an entire Comprehenſion of all the *intermediate* ones, from the beginning to the end; and his Power being not only the cauſe of all *actual* Events, but alſo of the *poſſibility* of thoſe that ſhall never be actual, he muſt needs diſcern the utmoſt Iſſues and Concomitants of every *poſſible*, as well as of every *future* Event, and *perfectly* underſtand not only what *will* be beneficial or injurious to us, but alſo what *might* be ſo. So that 'tis impoſſible for him to be miſtaken in his Choices, becauſe he knows as well before-hand what things *would* be to us if they

were

were, as what they *are* when they do *actually* exiſt. Upon the whole therefore, 'tis doubtleſs of ineſtimable advantage to us, to be in the hands of God; and verily, next to Hell it ſelf, I know nothing that is more formidable, than for God to let us alone, and give us up to our own Wills and Deſires. And ſhould he call to us from Heaven, and tell us, that he was reſolved to croſs our Deſires no more, but to comply with all our Wiſhes, let the Event prove good or bad, we ſhould have juſt reaſon to look upon our ſelves as the moſt *forlorn* and *abandoned* Creatures on this ſide Hell, as Perſons excluded from the greateſt Bleſſing that belongs to a Creature; and if we had any hope of his re-acceptance of us, it would be infinitely our Intereſt to *reſign* back our ſelves, and all our concerns to him, and on our bended knees to beſeech him, above all things, not to leave us to *our ſelves*, or throw us from *his* Care and Conduct. It being therefore, upon all accounts, ſo highly fit and reaſonable, and ſo much to our Intereſt and Advantage, that we ſhould freely *truſt* our ſelves, and all our Affairs, into the hands of God, and *depend* upon him for the good ſucceſs of all our honeſt Endeavours and Undertakings, that we ſhould acquieſce in his Diſpoſal of things, and under all outward Events be pleaſed and ſatisfied with his Conduct, as knowing that howſoever things may happen to us, they cannot be otherwiſe than as the wiſe and good God is pleaſed either to permit, or to order and determine them; this, I ſay, being ſo fit in it ſelf, and ſo much for our Intereſt, it is impoſſible that without it we can be happy either here or hereafter. For ſince both our Being and Well-being

are

are wholly dependent on the Will of God, and we can neither *be*, nor be *happy* one moment longer than he pleaſes, how is it poſſible we ſhould ever be *quiet*, and *ſatisfied* in our own Minds, without a great *Aſſurance* of, and *Confidence* in him? When we conſider what a mighty Stake we have in his hands, how all our Fortunes lie at his feet, and how eaſily he can frown us into *nothing*, or ſpurn us into a Condition ten thouſand times *worſe* than nothing, whenever he pleaſes, how can we be otherwiſe *ſecure* in our own Minds, or avoid being externally *anxious* and *ſolicitous*, but by firmly *relying* on his Truth and Goodneſs; to the want of which is to be attributed all that *carking* Care, *tormenting* Fear, and *diſquieting* Thoughtfulneſs, which perpetually haunts the Minds of Men. They are ſenſible that their Condition is dependent, and that it is not in their own power either to make it what they would have it, or to ſecure and continue it when it is made ſo; they know that by a thouſand Chances, which, in deſpite of their Foreſight or Power, may happen, the next moment either themſelves may be ſnatch'd from what they poſſeſs, or what they poſſeſs may be ſnatched from them; they find that their moſt probable Deſigns are liable to innumerable miſcarriages; and that when they have formed their Projects never ſo wiſely, there are infinite croſs Accidents may intercurr and daſh them in pieces; and in this uncertain State of their Affairs, they either think not of God at all, but live at the courteſie of a fickle Chance, and leave themſelves to be toſs'd and bandied to and fro at the pleaſure of a blind and undeſigning Fortune,

Fortune, upon whoſe ever-moving Wheel their wearied thoughts can never reſt? or if they think of God, it is with great *Miſtruſt* and *Deſpondency*; they fear he will not be regardful enough of them, nor prove ſo kind to them as they could wiſh; and are poſſeſs'd with an obſtinate Opinion, that 'twould be much better for them to be their own Carvers, than to live at his Diſpoſal and Allowance. And hence proceed all thoſe Anxieties and Diſcontents, thoſe *fretting* Cares, *diſmaying* Fears, *perplexing* and *miſgiving* Thoughts, which do continually gaul and diſquiet them; and from theſe their thorny Diſquietudes it is impoſſible they ſhould ever be wholly free, no, not in Heaven it ſelf, till they have wrought their Minds to a perfect *Truſt* and *Confidence* in God. For we ſhall be altogether as dependent upon God for our *heavenly*, as we are for our *earthly* Happineſs; becauſe, though all thoſe Acts of heavenly Vertue, in which our heavenly Happineſs conſiſts, will be much *more* in our own power, than any of theſe worldly Goods are; yet they will be no *longer* in our power than God ſhall think fit to enable us to chuſe and act, and to ſupport us in our Being and Exiſtence, which then we ſhall ſenſibly perceive entirely depends upon the All-enlivening vigour of his vital breath. And therefore though he hath *promiſed* to continue our being in that moſt bleſſed State for ever; yet unleſs we perfectly *truſt* in his Veracity, our Minds will be continually diſturbed with anxious and miſgiving Thoughts; we ſhall be afraid leſt one time or other he ſhould forget his Promiſe, and upon ſome unknown Reaſon or Emergency withdraw from us that influence of his

his All-upholding Power, upon which our Being and Well-being depends, and let us drop into Nothing. And the *greater* our Happiness is, the *more* we should be afraid of losing it; because we should be always sensible that it entirely depends upon the Pleasure of God, whose Truth and Goodness we cannot perfectly *confide* in. So that were we placed in the midst of Heaven with a *misgiving*, *distrustful* Mind of God, *that* would imbitter all the Joys of it, and give them a harsh and ungrateful Farewell. For the *fearful* Apprehensions we should continually have of being thrust out of Heaven again, and tumbled headlong from all our Glory, would be such a *continual* Affliction to us, that we should even *pine away* our happy Eternity, for fear of being eternally deprived of it. So impossible it is for any dependent Being to be happy, without an entire *Trust* and *Confidence* in God, upon whom its Being and Happiness depends.

And therefore the Gospel, to render our future Happiness compleat, endeavours to train us up before-hand to a firm and perfect *Confidence* in God, by making it an essential part of our Duty to *commit the keeping of our souls to God in well-doing*, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *To trust in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *Not to trust in our selves, but in God, who raiseth the dead*, 2 Cor. i. 9. *To believe in God*, and not to be troubled at any Events which happen to us in this World, *John* xiv. 1. and *not to cast away our confidence*, Heb. x. 35. and the like. The sense of all which, is, to press and engage us to a constant and chearful *Reliance* upon God, and to endeavour to

to affect our minds with a deep ſenſe of his over-ruling Providence, and a full Aſſurance of the Goodneſs of all thoſe great Deſigns he is driving on in the World; and accordingly to *acquieſce* in, and *embrace* all Events as the tokens of his Love and Favour, and always to live upon this Perſuaſion, that it is infinitely better for us to be in God's hands than in our own, and that he knows much better how to diſpoſe of us, and our affairs than we do, and that he will take care to diſpoſe of them as much to our advantage as we our ſelves ſhould, if *we* knew as much as *he* doth. Now though by reaſon of thoſe ſtrong Impreſſions which ſenſible things in this Life of Senſe make upon us, we ſhould not always be able ſo firmly to *rely* upon, and *repoſe* our ſelves in God's inviſible Power, as not to be at all diſquieted about the Iſſues and Events of things; yet if by frequent acts of *Truſt* and *Reliance* on him, we have ſo diſpoſed our minds to *confide* in him, as that by looking up to his over-ruling Providence, we can *ordinarily* ſtay and ſupport our ſelves, amidſt the Changes and Revolutions of this World; if when a ſtorm of Adverſity hangs lowring over, or ſhowres down upon us, we can flie to God for ſhelter, and promiſe our ſelves Safety and Protection under the out-ſtretched Wings of his Providence; in a word, if when we ſmart, we can *ordinarily* hope in him, and reſt perſuaded, that under his gracious Conduct and Diſpoſal, all things ſhall work together for our good; this our *imperfect wavering* Hope and Dependance, ſhall in the other life be immediately ripened into a moſt perfect *Confidence* and *Aſſurance*. For there we

shall be wholly removed from this Life of Sense, by which our *Trust* in God's invisible Providence is very much *weakned* and *distracted*; and besides we shall have much *quicker* apprehensions of his Nature, and of the infinite Reasons we have to *confide* in him. And then when after all the threats of a tempestuous Voyage, we shall find our selves landed in a blessed World, and possessed of all its promised Glories, this mighty *Experiment* of God's Fidelity and Goodness, will immediately settle our predispos'd minds, into such an immovable *Confidence* in him, as that from thenceforth no *Fear* or distrust will ever find the least access to our thoughts, but we shall be so perfectly assured of his Truth and Goodness, that though we shall feel our selves sustained and blest every moment by the Arbitrary Influences of his Benignity and Power, yet we shall be as *confident* for ever of the continuance of our bliss, as we could be, if we did *self-exist*, and held the eternity of our Being and Happiness as independently as God doth his. For though our Condition will be ever *dependent*, yet 'twill be ever dependent upon such a foundation as can no more fail than God's own Life and Being; *viz.* upon his Veracity and Goodness, both which are so essential to him, as that he cannot exist without them. And knowing our selves so firmly secured in this our dependent State, as that we can never sink, unless God himself sink under us, we shall be to all Eternity not only as *safe*, but as *satisfied* in it, as if we were every one a God to himself, and in this blessed Security we shall quietly enjoy God and our selves for ever. So that our *Trust* and *Confidence* in God

God will crown the Pleaſure of all our other Virtues, by giving us full Security of an everlaſting Fruition of it. For now the raviſhed mind will have no *fear* or *diſtruſt* to cramp or arreſt it, in its bleſſed operations; no *anxious* Thoughts of a ſad futurity to ſowre its preſent enjoyments; but 'twill enjoy *all* Heaven every moment, in a fearleſs Security of enjoying it *all* for ever. and when it ſhall perfectly *love*, *contemplate* and *adore* God, with a ſure and certain *Confidence* of *contemplating*, *loving* and *adoring* him perfectly for ever, O! how unſpeakably will this enhance the Pleaſure of thoſe beatifical Acts! For now in every moment of all our bleſſed Eternity, we ſhall ſtill have the Joy of a bleſſed Eternity to come; and beſides all thoſe Pleaſures which each preſent moment of our heavenly Life ſhall abound with, we ſhall ſtill have the Pleaſure of a Proſpect of infinite Ages of Pleaſure. And thus the bleſſed mind, you ſee, by its perfect *Dependence* upon God, conſummates its own Heaven, and ſecures it ſelf for ever in a moſt quiet and undiſturbed Enjoyment of it.

By all which I think it ſufficiently appears, how much each of theſe *Divine Virtues*, which as rational Creatures we are obliged to exert, and exerciſe upon *God*, contributes to our Heavenly Happineſs; and conſequently, how indiſpenſibly neceſſary our preſent Practice of them is to *diſpoſe* and *capacitate* us to enjoy it.

SECT. III.

Concerning the Social Virtues, *ſhewing that theſe alſo are included in the heavenly Part of the* Chriſtian Life, *and that in their Natures they very much contribute to our* Heavenly Happineſs.

Man of all ſublunary Creatures is the moſt adapted for *Society*. For though the greateſt part of other Creatures do *covet* Society, as well as he, yet *he* alone is furniſhed with that gift of Nature which renders Society moſt *pleaſant* and *uſeful*, and that is the gift of *Speech*. By Means of which we can expreſs our Thoughts, and maintain a mutual Intelligence of Minds, with one another; and thereby divert our Sorrows, mingle our Mirth, impart our Secrets, communicate our Counſels, and make mutual Compacts and agreements to ſupply and aſſiſt each other. And in theſe things conſiſts the greateſt *Uſe* and *Pleaſure* of Society. And as of all Creatures we are the beſt *fitted* for Society, ſo we ſtand in the greateſt *need* of it. For as for other Creatures, after they come into the World, they are much *ſooner* able to help themſelves than *we*; and after we are moſt able to help our ſelves, there are a world of neceſſaries and Conveniences, *without* which we cannot be happy, and *with* which we cannot be ſupplied without each others aid and aſſiſtance; which in an *unſociable* State of Life we ſhould of all Creatures in the World be the moſt indiſpoſed to render to one another. For as *Ariſtotle de Repub. lib.* 1. *pag.* 298. hath obſerved

obſerved, Ὥσπερ γὰρ τελειωθὲν βέλτιστον πάντων ζώων ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν, οὕτω καὶ χωρισθὲν νόμου καὶ δίκης χείριστον πάντων. As Man in his perfect ſtate is the beſt of all Animals, ſo ſeparated from Law and Right he is the worſt. For out of Society we ſee his Nature preſently degenerates, and inſtead of being inclined to aſſiſt, grows always moſt ſalvage and barbarous to his own kind. Since therefore we have ſo much need of each others help, Society is abſolutely neceſſary to cheriſh and preſerve in us our natural Benevolence towards one another, without which inſtead of being mutually *helpful*, we ſhould be mutually *miſchievous*. For as the ſame Philoſopher hath obſerved, Ὁ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν, ἢ μηδὲν δεόμενος δι' αὐτάρκειαν, οὐδὲν μέρος πόλεως, ὥστε ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός. *Id Ibid.* He that cannot contract Society with others, or through his own Self-ſufficiency doth not need it, belongs not to any Common-wealth, but is either a wild Beaſt, or a God. We being therefore ſo framed for Society, and under ſuch neceſſities of entring into it, it hence neceſſarily follows, that being *aſſociated* together, we are all obliged in our ſeveral Ranks and Stations ſo to behave our ſelves towards one another as is moſt for the *Common Good* of All; and that ſince the Happineſs of each *particular* Member of our Society redounds from the Welfare of the *Whole*, and is involved in it, we ought to eſteem nothing good for *our ſelves* that is a Nuiſance to the *Publick*. Becauſe whatſoever *this* ſuffers, I and every Man ſuffer; and unleſs I could be happy *alone*, that can never be for my Intereſt in *particular*, that is againſt my Intereſt

in *common.* Now in such a mutual Behaviour as most conduces to our common Benefit and Happiness as we are in Society with one another, consists all *Social Virtue*; the proper Use and Design of which is to preserve our Society with one another, and to render it a common Blessing to us all. And hereunto five things are necessary, *viz.*

1. That we be *charitably* disposed towards one another.

2. That we be *just* and *righteous* in all our Intercourses with each other.

3. That we behave our selves *peaceably* in our respective States and Relations.

4. That we be very *modest* towards those that are *Superiour* to us in our Society, whether it be in Desert or Dignity.

5. That webe very *treatable* and *condescending* to all that are *Inferiour* to us. Under these Particulars are comprehended all those *Social Virtues* upon which the Welfare and Happiness of Humane Society depends. Now that the Practice of all these is included in the *Christian Life*, and doth effectually conduce to our everlasting Happiness, I shall endeavour particularly to prove. And,

I. As rational Creatures *associated* and so related to *one another*, we are obliged to be *kindly* and *charitably* disposed towards each other. For the end of our Society being mutually to *aid* and *assist* one another; it is necessary in order hereunto that we should every one be *kind* and *benevolent* to every one, that so we may be continually inclined mutually to aid and do good Offices to one another,

another. And ſo far as we fall ſhort of *this*, we fall ſhort of the End of our Society. For to be ſure the leſs we *love* one another, the leſs prone we ſhall be to *promote* and *further* each others Welfare, and conſequently the leſs Advantage we ſhall reap from our mutual Society. But if inſtead of *loving*, we *malign* and *hate* each other, our Society will be ſo far from contributing to our Happineſs, that it will be only a means of rendring us more *miſerable*. For it will only furniſh us with fairer Opportunities of doing *Miſchief* to one another, and that mutual Intercourſe we ſhall have by being united together in Society will ſupply us with greater Means and Occaſions to wreak our *ſpight* upon each other. For Society, puts us within each others reach, and by that means (if we are Enemies) renders us more *dangerous* to one another; like two adverſe Armies, which when they are at a Diſtance can do but little hurt, but when they are joyned and mingled, never want opportunities to deſtroy and butcher one another. So that *Hatred* and *Malice*, you ſee, renders our Society a Plague, and we were much better live *apart* poorly and ſolitarily, and withdraw from one another as Beaſts of Prey do into their ſeparate Dens, than continue in one anothers reach, and be always liable, as we muſt be while we are in Society, to be *baited* and *worried* by one another.

And as *Hatred* and *Malice* ſpoils all our Society in *this* Life, and renders it worſe than the moſt diſmal Solitude, ſo it will alſo in the *other*. For whenſoever the Souls of Men do leave their Bodies, they doubtleſs flock to the Birds of their

own Feather, and conſort themſelves with ſuch ſeparate Spirits as are of their own Genius and Temper. For beſides that good and bad Spirits are by the eternal Laws of the other World deſtributed into two *ſeparate* Nations, and there live *apart* from one another, having no other Communication or Intercourſe but what is between two Hoſtile Countries that are continually deſigning and attempting one againſt another; ſo that when wicked Souls do leave this Terreſtrial Abode and paſs into Eternity, they are preſently incorporated by the Laws of that inviſible State into the Nation of wicked Spirits, and confined for ever to their moſt wretched Society and Converſe; beſides this, I ſay, *Likeneſs* doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and incline them to aſſociate with thoſe of their own Kind. Now *Rancour* and *Malice* is the proper Character of the Devil, and the natural Genius of Hell; and conſequently 'tis by a malicious Temper of Mind that we are *naturalized* before-hand Subjects of the Kingdom of Darkneſs, and qualified for the Converſation of Furies. So that when we go from hence into Eternity, this our *malignant* Genius will render us utterly averſe to the *friendly* Society of Heaven, and naturally preſs and incline us to conſort with that wretched Nation of *ſpiteful* and *rancorous* Spirits, with whom we are already joyned by a Likeneſs and communion of Natures. But O! much better were it for us to be ſhut up all alone for ever in ſome dark Hole of the World, where we might converſe only with our own melancholy Thoughts, and never hear of any other being but our ſelves, than to be continually plagued with

with ſuch vexatious Company. For though we who are Spectators only of *Corporeal* Action, cannot diſcern the manner how one Spirit acts upon another; yet there is no doubt but *Spiritual* Agents can ſtrike as immediately upon Spirits, as *bodily* Agents can upon Bodies; and ſuppoſing that theſe can mutually act upon one another there is no more doubt but they can mutually make each other feel each others *Pleaſures* and *Diſpleaſures*, and that according as they are more or leſs *powerful*, they can more or leſs *aggrieve* and *afflict* one another. And if ſo, what can be expected from a company of *ſpiteful* and *malicious* Spirits joined in Society together, but that their Converſation ſhould be a continnal Intercourſe of mutual *Miſchiefs* and *Vexations?* eſpecially conſidering how they *here* laid the foundation of an eternal Quarrel againſt one another. For *there* all thoſe Companions in Sin will meet, who by their ill *Counſels*, wicked *Inſinuations*, and bad *Examples*, did mutually contribute to each others Ruine; and being met in ſuch a *woful* State; how will the tormenting ſenſe of thoſe irreparable injuries they have done each other, whet their *Fury* againſt, and incite them to *play the Devils* with one another? And what can be expected from ſuch a Company of *waſpiſh* Beings, ſo implacably incenſed againſt one another, but that being ſhut up together in the infernal Den, they ſhould be perpetually *hiſſing* at, and *ſtinging* each other? But then beſides thoſe mutual plagues which theſe furious Spirits muſt be ſuppoſed to inflict upon one another, they will be alſo nakedly expoſed to the powerful Malice of the *Devils* thoſe fierce Executioners

Executioners of God's righteous Vengeance, who, as we now find by Experience, have power to ſuggeſt *black* and *horrid* Thoughts to us, and to *torture* our Souls with ſuch dreadful Imaginations as are far more ſharp and exquiſite than any *bodily* Torments. And if *now* they have ſuch Power over us, when God thinks fit to let them looſe, what will they have *hereafter*, when our wretched Spirits ſhall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they ſhall have free Scope to exerciſe their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice with our Griefs and Vexations; it ſeems at leaſt a mighty probable Notion, that *that* horrid Agony of our Saviour in the Garden, which cauſed him to ſhriek and groan, and ſweat as it were great Drops of Bloud, was chiefly the effect of thoſe *preternatural* Terrours, which the Devils, with whom he was then conteſting, *impreſſed* upon his innocent Mind. And if they had ſo much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul, that was ſo ſtrongly guarded with the moſt *perfect* and *unſpotted* Virtues, what will they have over ours when we are abandoned to them, and thrown as Preys into their Mouths? With what an Helliſh Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls, in which there is ſo much Tinder for their injected Sparks of Horrour to take fire on?

Since therefore *Rancour* and *Malice* doth ſo naturally incline and hurry our Souls towards the wretched Society of Devils and damned Spirits, the Goſpel which ſo induſtriouſly conſults our Happineſs, takes all poſſible Care to train us up in *Charity* and mutual *Love*; and makes it a Principal, as well as neceſſary Part of our *Chriſtian Life*,

Life, heartily to *love one another*. For this, as our Saviour tells us, is the Darling precept which lay next to his Heart, *this is my Commandment that ye love one another*, John xv. 12. And accordingly we are bid not only *to follow after Charity*, 1 Cor. xiv. 1. and *to do all things with Charity*, 1 Cor. xvi. 14. but alſo *to put on Charity*, *above all things*, Col. iii. 14. and to *dwell in Love*, which the Apoſtle tells us, is to *dwell in God who is Love*, 1 Joh. iv. 16. The intent of all which is, to oblige us to bear an univerſal *good Will* to all, and to take an hearty *Complacency* in all that are truly lovely; to be ready to contribute to and rejoyce in every ones *Good* and *Welfare*, and in a word, to live in the continual exerciſe of all thoſe *charitably* Offices which our preſent State and Condition requires and calls for. To be *courteous* and *affable*, and to treat all thoſe we converſe with with an obliging Look, a gentle Deportment, and endearing Language. To be *long-ſuffering*, *mild* and *eaſie to be entreated*; not to break forth into Rage and Storm upon every petty Provocation, and when we are juſtly provoked, not to ſuffer our Diſpleaſure to feſter into *Malice* and *Rancour*, but to be forward and eaſie to be reconciled. To be of a *compaſſionate* and *ſympathizing* Temper, and to rejoyce with thoſe that rejoyce, and weep with thoſe that weep. To be *candid* Interpreters of Men and their Actions; to be ready to *mitigate* and *excuſe* their Faults, and put *fair* Comments on their Actions; and to be ſo far from making *malicious* Gloſſes on their *innocent* Meaning, from *proclaiming* their Miſcarriages, and *rejoycing* in their Falls, as not to believe ill of them, but upon undeniable Evidence, and when we

we are forced to do ſo, to *pity* and *lament* them, and *endeavour*, and *pray*, and *hope* for their Reformation. In ſhort, to be *benign* and *bountiful* to the neceſſitous and diſtreſſed, and to endeavour according to our Ability to allay their Sorrows, remove their Oppreſſions, ſupport them under their Calamities, and counſel them in their Doubts; to be ready to every good Work, and like Fields of Spices to be ſcattering our perfumes through all the Neighbourhood; and all this out of an *honeſt* and *ſincere* purpoſe to promote their Good, and not meerly to acquire to our ſelves a popular Vogue and Reputation. All which are eſſential Parts of that Charity which the Goſpel enjoyns us to exerciſe towards one another. For ſo the Apoſtle aſſures us, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Charity ſuffereth long, and is kind, charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no evil, rejoyceth not in iniquity, but rejoyceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

Now though there be ſeveral Acts of Charity that will ceaſe for ever in Heaven, ſuch as *long-ſuffering*, *giving of Alms*, and *forgiving of Injuries*, and the like; becauſe among the People of Heaven there will be none of the Faults or Miſeries about which *theſe* Acts are converſant; yet even the Practice of *theſe* is indiſpenſably neceſſary to *temper* and *diſpoſe* our Minds to Heavenly Charity, which till we are *diſpoſed to* by univerſal Love, we ſhall never be capable of *exerciſing*; but ſince all virtuous Diſpoſitions are acquired by Acts, it is impoſſible

impoſſible we ſhould acquire the Diſpoſition of univerſal Love, unleſs we univerſally practiſe it. 'Tis by *giving Alms* that we muſt acquire cordial Charity to the *poor* and *needy*; and by *forgiving Injuries* that we muſt diſpoſe our ſelves to love thoſe that *offend* us. For theſe Acts are *Cauſes* as well as *Signs* of a charitable Temper, and are neceſſary, not only to *ſignifie it* where it *is*, but alſo to produce it where it is *not*. When therefore by acting all thoſe Parts of Charity which are proper to *this* as well as the *other* State, we have acquired this bleſſed Diſpoſition of *univerſal Charity*, our Minds are fairly *framed* and *tempered* for the Society of Heaven. And though in the perpetual Juſtle and Tumult of this World, ſome little *Piques* and *Diſpleaſures* ſhould now and then ariſe in our Minds, yet if in the *cool* and *ſtanding* Temper of our Souls we are hearty Well-wiſhers to all Men, and hearty Lovers of all that do in any meaſure *love* and *reſemble* God, we are in a natural Tendency to Heaven, that perfect Element of Love, and when we go from hence ſhall conſort our ſelves with unſpeakable Joy and Alacrity with thoſe *great* and *bleſſed* Lovers that inhabit it. Who being all of them moſt amiable and Godlike Souls, that are every one of the ſame Temper with our ſelves, being touched at the ſame Loadſtone, and made partakers of the ſame Divine Nature, we ſhall immediately cloſe and joyn with them in the ſtricteſt Unions of Love. For thoſe heavenly People being all of them moſt *flagrant* Lovers of God, are ſo united in him who is the common *Center* of Love, that no Saint or Angel can enjoy *his* Love without poſſeſſing a proportionate Degree

gree of *theirs*; and their Love of one another being all *ſubordinate* to their common Love to God, and *grounded* upon it, though their ſtrongeſt Inclination, like that of *excited* Needles, be ſtill towards *him* the bleſſed Magnet at which they have every one been touched, yet do they all *ſtick faſt* to one another, being *clung* inſeparably together by thoſe attractive Virtues which they have all derived from him. And in this State of perfect *Friendſhip* they converſe together with unſpeakable Pleaſure, aud all their Converſation is a perpetual Intercourſe of *wiſe* and *holy* Endearments. And now what a bleſſed Society muſt this be, wherein perfect *Love* and *Friendſhip* reigns, and hath an All-commanding Empire; where every Heart *mingles* with every one; and all like precious duſts of Gold, are melted together into one ſolid Ingot: where infinite Myriads of bleſſed Spirits, by interchangeably *claſping* and *twining* with one another, are ſo inſeparably *united* and *grown together*, that they are all but one *compounded* Soul; And when from the higheſt Angel to the loweſt Saint they are all ſo *tied* together by the Heart ſtrings that every one is every ones *dear* Friend, what inexpreſſible *Content* and *Complacency* muſt they needs take in one another! When I ſhall paſs all Heaven over through ten thouſands millions of bleſſed Beings, and meet none but ſuch as I moſt dearly *love*, and am as dearly *beloved* by. O! what unſpeakably Rejoycing and Congratulations will there be between us! Eſpecially when I ſhall find no Defect either of Goodneſs or Happineſs in *them*, nor they in *me*, to damp our mutual Joy and Delight in each other; but every one ſhall be what every

every one wiſhes him, a *perfect* and a *bleſſed* Friend. For perfect Lovers have all their *Joys* and *Griefs* in common between them; but the Heavenly Lovers having no *Griefs* among them, do only communicate their *Joys* to one another. For where they love ſo perfectly as they do in Heaven, there can be no ſuch thing as a *private* or *particular* happineſs, but every one muſt have a ſhare in every ones; and conſequently in this their mutual Communication of Bliſſes, every ones Happineſs will, by his Friendſhip to every one, be multiplied into as many Happineſſes as there are Saints and Angels in Heaven; and ſo every Joy of every Member of the Church Triumphant runs round the whole Body in an eternal *Circulation*. For that bleſſed Body being all compoſed of *conſenting* Hearts, that like perfect Uniſons are tuned up to the ſame Key, when any one is *touched*, every one *echoes* and *reſounds* the ſame Note; and whilſt they thus mutually *ſtrike* upon each other, and all are affected with *every ones* Joys, it is impoſſible but that in a ſtate where there is nothing but Joy, there ſhould be a continual Conſort of raviſhing Harmony among them. For ſuch is their dear concern for one another, that every ones Joy not only *pays to*, but *receives* Tribute from every ones, ſo that when any one bleſſed Spirit rejoyces, his Joy goes round the whole Society; and then all their rejoycings in his Joy *reflow* upon, and *ſwell* and *multiply* it; and ſo as they mutually *borrow* one anothers Joys, they always *pay* them back with Intereſt, and by thus *receprocating* do everlaſtingly *increaſe* them.

II. As

II. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another*, we are obliged to be *just* and *righteous* in all our Intercourses with each other. To yield to every one whatsoever by any Kind of Right, whether *natural* or *acquired*, he can demand or challenge of us. For there are some things to which every Man hath a Right by Nature as he is a part or Member of Humane Society. As for instance, *Life*, which is the principal of all our Actions and Perceptions, is freely lent us by God, who is the Source and Fountain of Life; and consequently till God *resumes* his Loan, or we *forfeit* it by our own Actions, we have all a natural Right to *live*, and for any Man to attempt to deprive us of our Life, or of our Means of living, is the highest Injury and Injustice. Again, *Words* being instituted for no other End but to signifie our Meaning, and to be the instrument of our Intercourse and Society with one another, every one who is a Member of humane Society, hath a Right to have our Meaning *truly* signified to him by our Words, and whosoever *lyes* or *equivocates* to another, doth thereby injuriously deprive him of the natural Right of Society. Again, a *good Name* being the Ground of Trust and Credit, and Credit the main Sinew of Society, till men have forfeited their good Name, they have a natural Right to be *well reputed* and *spoken* of; and whosoever either by *false* Witness, *publick* slander, or *private* Whisperings, endeavours to attaint an innocent Mans Reputation, doth thereby injuriously attempt to exclude him from the Conversation of Men, and shut the Door of humane Society against him. Once more, *Promises* being the great

great Security of our Mutual Intercourſe and Society with one another, every Man that hath a Right to Society hath a Right to what another *promiſeth* him, provided it be but *lawful* and *poſſible*; and therefore for any Man to promiſe what he *intends* not to perform or to go *back* from his Promiſe when he lawfully *may* or *can* perform it, is an Act of unjuſt Rapine; and I may every whit as honeſtly rob another Man of what is his *without* my Promiſe, as of what I have made his *by* it; he having an equal Right to *both* by the fundamental Laws of Society. In fine, the great Deſign of our Society being to *help* and *aſſiſt* one another; every Man has a Right to be *aided* and *aſſiſted* by every one with whom he hath any Dealing or Intercourſe; to have ſome Share of the Benefit of all that Exchange, Traffick, and Commerce which paſſes between him and others; and therefore for any Man in his Dealings with others to take Advantage from their Neceſſity or Ignorance to *oppreſs* or *over-reach* them, or to deal ſo *hardly* by them as either not to allow them any ſhare of the Profit which accrues from their Dealings or not a *ſufficient* ſhare for them to ſubſiſt and live by, is an injurious Invaſion of that natural Right which the very end and Deſign of Society gives them. But then beſides theſe *natural* there are alſo acquired Rights; and ſuch are thoſe which either by *legal* Conſtitution, or by *mutual*, Compacts and Agreements we are ſeized and veſted with; which *Conſtitutions* and *Compacts* being abſolutely neceſſary to the upholding and regulating of humane Societies, it is no leſs neceſſary that all thoſe Rights which they confer ſhould be

inviolably preserved; and whosoever knowingly or wilfully takes away or detains from another what he is thus entitled to by Law or agreement, is guilty either of a *Fraud* or a *Robbery*, either of which is an unjust Violation of the Rights of humane Society. So that the Practice of *Justice* and *Righteousness*, as it is confined to humane Society, consists in not intrenching either upon the *natural* or *acquired* Rights of those with whom we have any Dealing or Intercourse; in not endeavouring to deprive them either of their *Lives* or *Livelihoods*, unless by their own Actions they *forfeit* them to us; in imparting our *true* Meaning to them by our Words, and neither *hiding* it under *Lyes* and *Falshoods*, nor *disguising* it with equivocal *Reservations*; in making good to them all our lawful and possible *Promises*, in not falsely aspersing their *good Names* and *Reputations*, nor suffering them to be *falsely aspersed* when we are able to vindicate them; in neither using them *cruelly* in our Dealings, so as wilfully to damnifie them, nor *hardly*, so as either to take *all* the Advantage to our selves, or not to allow them such a *competent* share of it as is necessary to support and maintain them: in a word, not to *defraud* or *rob* them of any thing which either by Constitution of *Law*, or by *Compact* and *Agreement* they have a Right to. This is *civil Righteousness*, and without this it is impossible that any Society should be *happy*. For how can any one be secure in a Society where *Violence* and *Rapine*, *Falshood* and *Oppression* reign; where Causes are decided, not by Rules of *Justice*, but by dint of *Power*, and the strongest Arm is the sole *Arbitrator* of *Right* and *Wrong*; where

where *Promiſes* and *Profeſſions* are only *Traps* and *Snares*; and every Man lays *Ambuſhes* in his Words, and lurks behind them in *reſerved* Meanings, only to await an Opportunity to *ſurprize* and *ruine* every one he converſes with? It would doubtleſs be far more eligible for Men to *diſperſe* and *disband* their Society, and live *apart* as Vermin do, and ſubſiſt by *robbing* and *filching* from one another, than live together as they muſt in ſuch a State of injuſtice, like Bundles of Briars and Thorns, and out of their mutual Jealouſies and Diſtruſts be continually *tearing* and *ſcratching* one another.

Now, as I ſhewed you before, what Mens Tempers are *here*, ſuch will their Company be *hereafter*. So that if we go out of *this* World with an *unrighteous* Temper, we muſt expect to be confined in the *other* to an *unrighteous* Society; and if Unrighteouſneſs be ſuch a *Nuiſance* to our Society in this Life, what a *Plague* will it be to it in the Life to come? For the moſt *barbarous* Societies of Men in this Life, have ſome *Remains* of Juſtice and Equity among them; and though the *beſt* of them have many corrupt Members that are bad in the *main*, yet whether it be by their natural Temper, or their Fear of Puniſhment or Diſgrace, or by their Senſe of Honour, or Checks of Conſcience, they are frequently reſtrained from many bad things, and particularly from *Diſhoneſty* and *Injuſtice*; by which means their Society is rendred much more tolerable. But in the other Life, as they are all *perfectly* good that are in the Society of the good, ſo they are all *perfectly* wicked that are in the Society of the wicked; and whatſoever Checks there may

be in their Natures to any *particular* Acts of Wickedneſs, they are there *all* born down by their inveterate Malice againſt God, and out-ragious deſpair of every being reconciled to him. So that in all their Society with one another there is not the leaſt intermixture of *juſt* and *righteous* Intercourſe, but all their Converſation is *Falſhood* and *Treachery*, *Violence* and *Oppreſſion*, and whatſoever elſe is *hurtful* and *injurious* to one another. For the Devil, who is the ſovereign Prince of their Society, is deſcribed in Scripture to be the *Father of Lyes*, and a *Murtherer from the beginning*, that is, a moſt outragiouſly unjuſt and unrighteous Being, one whoſe whole Trade hath been to cheat and deceive, to rook men of their Happineſs, and mask his murtherous Intentions againſt them with diſſembled Smiles, and fawning Endearments, and doubtleſs *Regis ad exemplum* is true *there* as well as *here*, the miſerable Vaſſals of his dark Kingdom do all imitate his Manners, and tread in his Footſteps. And if ſo, O good Lord, what *woful* Society muſt they have with one another when by reaſon of their continual Experience of each other *Falſhood* and *Inſincerity*, all mutual *Truſt* and *Confidence* is baniſhed from among them, and every one is forced to ſtand upon his own Guard in continual Expectance of *Miſchief* from every one. When all their Life is a Trade of *Diabolical* Knaveries, and their whole Study is to *do* and *retaliate* Injuries, and the main Buſineſs of this their helliſh Society is to *circumvent* and *play the Devils* with one another. Doubtleſs *this alone* is enough to make Hell a moſt dreadful State, though there were *nothing elſe* dreadful in it;

and

and I verily believe, if it were left to my own Option, I ſhould much rather chuſe to languiſh out an Eternity in ſome diſmal Dungeon *alone*, and there converſe only with my own ſilent Griefs, than to dwell for ever in the Garden of the World accompanied with ſuch *falſe* and *villainous* Creatures.

That this therefore may not be our Fate *hereafter*, it is a great Part of the Buſineſs of our Holy Religion to train us up for better Company, by inuring us *beforehand* to the Practice of *Righteouſneſs* and *Juſtice*. For ſo it obliges us *to do unto men whatſoever we would that men ſhould do unto us*, Mark vii. 12. that is ſo to deal with every man as if we had exchanged perſons with him, and he were in our place, and we in his. And in particular it enjoyns us to be *harmleſs as Doves, as well as wiſe as Serpents*, Mat. x. 16. *to converſe in the World with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity*, 2 Cor. i. 12. *to keep up an honeſt converſation in the world*, 1 Pet. ii. 12. *not to lye to one another*, Col. iii. 9. *not to go beyond or defraud our brother in any matter*, 1 Theſ. iv. 6. The ſenſe of all which is, to oblige us to maintain a ſtrict *Integrity* in all our Profeſſions and Intercourſes with men, and not to allow our ſelves in any Courſe of Action which the Laws of *Juſtice* and *Sincerity* diſapprove; to meaſure our *Words* by our *Meaning*, and our *Meaning* ſo far as we are able, by the *Truth* and *Reality* of things; to converſe among men with a generous *Openneſs* and *Freedom*, and with as little *Reſerve* and *Diſguiſe* as is poſſible and prudent, conſidering what a *treacherous* and *ill-natured* World we have to deal with; to *be* what we *ſeem*, and not to paint ill Meanings

with smiling Looks and smooth Pretences; to *notifie* our Intentions, and *unfold* our Hearts, and, so far as innocent Prudence will admit, to turn ourselves *inside outwards* to all we converse with, to give to every one his due, and not to intrench upon other mens Rights, whether it be to their *Lives* or *Liberties*, *Reputations* or *Estates*: in a word, to weigh to our Neighbours and our selves in the same Balance, and to to do *them* whatsoever we could reasonably wish they should do to *us*, if *we* were in *their* Persons and Circumstances. By the Practice of which excellent Rules our Mind will by degrees be refined and purified from all Disposition to *Fraud* and *Injustice*; and then when we go from hence into Eternity, we shall carry thither with us such a *just* and *righteous* Frame of Mind, such an honest *Plainness* and *Integrity* of Temper as will immediately qualifie and dispose us for the Society of *just men made perfect*, who finding us already united to them in *Disposition* and *Nature*, will joyfully receive us into their blessed Communion. And now, O the blessed State we shall be in, when being stripped of all *Partiality* and *unjust Desire*, of all *Insincerity* and *Craftiness* of Temper, we shall be admitted into a Nation of *just* and *righteous* People, where every one has his appropriate Seat and Mansion of Glory and is so perfectly *contented* with it that he never *covets* what another enjoys, so that every one possesses what is his own without the least suspicion of being ejected by a *subtiller* or more *powerful* Neighbour; where being perfectly assured of each others *Integrity*, they converse together with the greatest Openness and Freedom,

and

and in all their Language whatſoever it be, do *read* their Hearts and *convey* their Intentions to one another; where their Souls converſe *faceto face* and do freely *unboſom* themſelves to one another without the leaſt *Diſguiſe* or *Diſſimulation*; ſo that in all their Society there is no ſuch thing as a *Secret* or *Myſtery*, but they are all Boſom-Friends to one another, and every one has a Window into every ones Breſt! O bleſſed God, what a moſt happy Converſation muſt ſuch juſt Souls as theſe enjoy with one another, from whoſe Society all Fraud and Falſhood, violence and Oppreſſion is forever baniſhed! For whilſt they live together as they do in the continual Exerciſe of perfect *Righteouſneſs* and *Integrity*, they can neither deſign upon, nor ſuſpect one another, and ſo conſequently muſt needs converſe together with infinite Security and Freedom. And being all of them thus inviolably ſafe in each others *Sincerity* and *Juſtice*; every one enjoys his proper Rank and Degree of Glory without Fear or Diſturbance, and freely communicates his *wiſe* and *excellent* Thoughts to every one without any Strangeneſs or Reſerve. Thus all Heaven over there is a moſt perfect *Freedom* of Converſation among thoſe *righteous* People that inhabit it, and every one is every ones *Neighbour*, and every ones Neighbour is as *Himſelf*. For in all their Communication and Intercourſe they mutually *exchange* Perſons with one another, and there is no one *doth* that to another which he would not gladly have *done* to himſelf in the ſame Condition and Circumſtances. So that none of them all can poſſibly be aggrieved becauſe they *are* every

one dealt by just as they *would be*, most *fairly*, most *righteously* and *faithfully*. And hence there can be no *Grudges* among them, no *Whisperings*, *Backbitings*, or spightful *Misrepresentations*, because every one likes what every one does, and so they are all perfectly satisfied with one another. And thus you see in the Exercise of perfect *Righteousness* and *Integrity* all the Society of Heaven is rendred perfectly *happy*.

III. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another*, we are obliged to behave our selves *peaceably* in our respective States and Relations. For Society being nothing but an united Multitude, it is indispensably necessary to the preservation of its Union, that every individual Member of it should *peaceably* comport himself towards every one in that Degree and Order wherein he is placed. Because, as the Health of *natural* Bodies depends upon the Harmony and Agreement of their Parts, so doth the Prosperity of Societies or *political* ones. For 'tis *Peace* and mutual *Accord* which is the Soul that doth both animate and unite Society, and keep the Parts of it from dispersing and flying abroad into Atoms, which nothing but Force and Violence can hinder them from, when once they are broken into Discords and dissentions. So true is that of our Saviour, *A Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand.* For besides that Division impairs the strength of a Society, which like an impetuous stream, being parted into several Currents, runs with far less force, and is much more easily forded; for the several Factions that are in it are like the several Nations in a confederate Army, which though they be

be all united into one Body have ſeveral contrary Intereſts and Deſigns, which divides their Councils, and ſows Jealouſies among them, and ſo renders them not only leſs *able* to withſtand the Force of an unanimous Enemy, but alſo leſs *willing* to aid and aſſiſt one another; beſides this, I ſay, Faction and Diſcord naturally diſ-unites and ſeparates Society, as it diſſolves the Bond of Peace which holds it together. For a Society without Peace is but an aggregated Body, whoſe Parts lie together in a confuſed heap, but have no Joynts or Sinews to faſten them to one another; for want of which, inſtead of mutually aſſiſting, they do but mutually load and oppreſs each other; which muſt neceſſarily divide their *Wills* and their *Intereſts*, and when that is done, 'tis only external Force that hinders them from dividing and ſeparating their *Perſons*. Upon this account therefore every man is obliged, as he is a Member of Humane Society, to comport himſelf *peaceably* with all Men; becauſe otherwiſe he will neceſſarily render himſelf a publick Peſt and Nuiſance. For ſo long as he is of an *unquiet* and *turbulent* Spirit, inſtead of being an *Help* he muſt neceſſarily be a *Diſeaſe* to every Community, of which he is a Member; and if thoſe, with whom he is joined, were all of his Humour and Spirit, it would be much better for them all to live aſunder in the moſt ſolitary Condition, than to continue in Society together; becauſe inſtead of *helping* and *aſſiſting*, they would be ſure to be continually *vexing* and *plaguing* one another.

If therefore we go into the other World with an *unquiet* and *quarrelſom* Temper, we ſhall be thereby

thereby inclined to and prepared for the moſt wretched and miſerable Society, even the Society of thoſe *factious* Fiends that could not be quiet even in Heaven it ſelf, but raiſed a Mutiny before the Throne of God, and for ſo doing were driven thence, and damned to keep one another Company in endleſs Miſery and Deſpair. The Souls of Men therefore being by the Laws of the inviſible State always aſſigned to that Society of Spirits whereunto they are moſt con-naturalized in their Temper, we muſt expect, if we go into Eternity with *turbulent* and *contentious* Minds, to be thruſt into the Society of Devils and damned Ghoſts, with whom we are already joined in a ſtrict Communion of Natures. And O! what a *dreadful* thing muſt it be, to be forced to ſpend an Eternity in ſuch *Wretched* Company! Verily methinks the moſt horrid and frightful Idea I can form in my own Mind, is, that of a company of *ſnarling* and *quarrelſom* Spirits, crowded like ſo many Scorpions and Adders into a Den together, and there forced by the Venomouſneſs of their Temper to live in continual Mutiny, and be perpetually *hyſſing* and *ſpitting* Poiſon at one another. For though thoſe Words of our Saviour, *Matt.*xii. 25, 26. imply that Satan's Kingdom is *not* divided, yet they are not to be ſo underſtood as if there were any ſuch thing as *Peace* or *Concord* among thoſe rancorous Spirits, for that is impoſſible to be imagined; no, doubtleſs they would be divided eternally if they could, being ſuch continual Plagues as they are to one another, and think it a mighty Happineſs to be ſhut up all *alone* in ſeparate Dens, where they might never *ſee* nor *hear* of one another more;

more; but being chained together as they are by an Adamantine Fate, which they cannot withstand, they consent in *this*, and in this *only*, to oppose all good Designs, and do the utmost Mischief they are able. But as to all their other Intercourses they are continually embroiled, and do live in an eternal Variance with one another. So that their Society is like that Monster *Scylla*, whom the Poets talk of, whose inferiour parts were a company of Dogs that were perpetually snarling and quarrelling among themselves, and yet were inseparable from one another, as being all of them parts of the same Substance.

Wherefore since to be united by indissoluble Ligaments to this wretched Society will be the certain Fate of all *factious* and *contentious* Souls, our blessed Religion, whose great Design is to advance our happiness, hath taken abundant care to educate our Minds in *Quietness* and *Peace*. For hither tend all those Precepts of it which require us to *follow peace with all men*, Heb. xii. 14. *to be at peace among our selves*, 1 Thes. v. 13. *to follow after the things that make for peace*, Rom. xiv. 19. *to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, Ephes. iv. 3. *to be of one mind and to live in peace*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *and if it be possible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men*, Rom. xii. 18. In a word, *to mark them that cause divisions among us, and avoid them*, Rom. xvi. 17. and to do our part *that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement*, 1 Cor. i. 10. The Design of all which is to bind us over to the Study and Practice of *Unity* and *Concord*, and restrain us by

by the strictest Obligations from all *schismatical*, *factious*, and *turbulent* Behaviour in those sacred or civil Societies whereof we are Members. And unless we do sincerely endeavour to fulfil these Obligations, however we may *monopolize* Godliness to our own Party, and *claw* and *canonize* one another, we are Saints of a quite different strain from those blessed ones above, and are acted by the *factious* Spirit of the Devil, whose Business it is to foment divisions and kindle disturbances and Commotions where-ever he comes. This therefore must be our great Care if we design for Heaven, to root out of our Tempers all inclination to *Contention* and *Discord*, and to compose our selves into a *sedate* and *peaceable*, *calm* and *gentle* frame of Spirit; and not only to avoid all unnecessary Quarrels and Contentions *our selves*, but so far as in us lies to be Peace-makers between *others*, and preserve a friendly Union *with* and *among* our fellow members. And if through humane *Frailty* and *Infirmity*, through our own *Ignorance* or the plausible *Pretences* of Seducers, through the too great Prevalence of our worldly *Interest*, or the Principles of a bad *Education*, it should be our Misfortune to be insensibly *mis-led* into unwarrantable Dissents and Divisions, yet still to keep our Minds in a teachable temper, and our Ears open to *Truth* and *Conviction*; to be desirous of *Accommodation*, and willing to hear the Reason on *both sides*, and as soon as we are *convinced* of our Error, to *repent* of our Division, and immediately return to *Unity* and *Peace*.

Which if it be our constant Practice and Endeavour, we shall by Degrees form our Minds into

into such a *peaceable* and *amicable* Temper, that when we go into the other World where we shall be perfectly disengaged from all temporal interests, and throughly convinced of all our erroneous Prejudice, our Souls will be effectually contempered to the *quiet* and *peaceable* Society of the Blessed; who having no private Interests to pursue, no particular Affections to gratifie, no Ends or Aims but what are common to them all, which is to *adore*, and imitate, and *love* that never failing Spring whence all their Felicity flows, it is impossible there should be any Occasion administred by any of them of any Schism or Rupture of Communion. And so those happy People live in the most perfect Unity and Concord, as being all united in their ends, and tied together by their heart-strings. For they having no counter Opinions or cross interests to divide them, nothing but Truth *shining* in their Minds, nothing but Goodness *reigning* in their Wills, it is impossible there should be any *dissenting Brother* among them, any *Non-conformist* to the blessed Laws of their Communion; but conspiring together as they do in the same Mind and Interest, and in the same peaceable Intentions and Affections, they must needs walk hand in hand together in a most perfect *Uniformity*. So that if we would live for *ever* with these blessed folk, we must now endeavour to *calm* and *compose* our selves into their Temper; to discharge our Minds, as much as we are able, of every *froward* and *contentious* Humour, and reduce our Wills to a perfect loathing of them; that so being *qualified* for their Society we may be *admitted* to it when we go away from this *wrangling*

ling World. And then how unspeakably happy shall we be, when with Minds perfectly refined from all Contention and Bitterness, we shall be received into the Company of those *calm* and *sedate* Spirits, and bear our part in their *sweet* and *placid* Conversation, wherein they freely communicate their minds to one another without the least *Fierceness* or *Insolence*, *Captiousness* or *Misconstruction*, *Clamor* or *Contention for Victory*, and do eternally discourse over the wise things of Heaven, and still perfectly concenter both in their *Understandings* and *Wills*; wherein like so many Stars in Conjunction they mingle Light with one another, and do peaceably communicate the treasures of their Knowledge without the least bandying or Controversie. For though *some* of them do doubtless know much more than others, yet there being no Intermixture of error in the Knowledge of *any*, it is impossible they should *oppose* or *contradict* one another, because whatsoever is true, agrees with every thing that is true. And being thus united in Mind and Judgement, they freely communicate their Thoughts without ever disputing one another's Sentences, which renders it impossible for them ever to *quarrel* or *disagree*. So that all their Communion is a perfect *Concord* of Souls; wherein there is no such thing as *Schism* or *Division*, as passing *cruel* Censures, or affixing *hard* Names, or bandying *Anathema's* at one another, but in Mind and Heart they are all as perfectly *one* as if they were all animated by one and the same Soul. And thus they live unspeakably happy in the mutual Exercise of an everlasting *Peace*, and all their Conversation with one another is perfect *Harmony* without *Discords*.

IV. As

IV. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another*, we are obliged *modeſtly* to ſubmit to our *Superiours*, and chearfully to *condeſcend* to our *Inferiours*, in thoſe reſpective Societies whereof we are Members. Theſe two I put together, becauſe they are Relatives, and as ſuch do mutually explain and contribute light to each other. Now it being neceſſary to the Order and End of all Societies, that their Members ſhould be diſtinguiſhed into *ſuperiour* and *inferiour* Ranks and Stations; that ſome ſhould be truſted with the power of *Commanding*, and others reduced to the condition of *Obedience*, that ſo in this regular Subordination they may every one in their ſeveral ſtations be obliged to *aid* and *aſſiſt* each other, and according to their ſeveral Capacities to contribute to the good of the *Whole*; which in a ſtate of Equality (wherein every Man would be abſolute Lord of himſelf) cannot be expected, conſidering the different Humours and Intereſts by which Men are acted; this, I ſay, being upon this account neceſſary, it is, upon the ſame account, equally neceſſary that they ſhould mutually perform thoſe Offices to one another, which are proper to their reſpective Ranks and Stations. That Superiours ſhould look upon themſelves as *Truſtees* for the Publick Good, whom God hath inveſted with Authority over others, not to *domineer* and gratifie their own *imperious* Wills, but to *provide* for and *ſecure* the Common-wealth; and conſequently to take care that they do not proſtitute their *Power* to their own private *Avarice* or *Ambition*, but that they employ it for the Common Good and Benefit of their Subjects and Inferiours; that they be ready

to

to do them all good Offices, to compassionate their *Infirmities*, consult their *Conveniencies*, and comply with all their reasonable *Supplications*; considering that for this End they derived their Authority from God, who is the Fountain of Authority, to whom they are accountable for their good and bad Administration of it. And so for the Inferiours, it is no less necessary for the Common Good, that they perform their parts towards those that are above them; that they behave themselves towards them, with all that *Loyalty* and *Modesty*, *Respect* and *Submission*, which their Place and Authority calls for; that they reverence them as the *Vice-gerents* of God, and address to them as to *sacred* Persons, and render a chearful Obedience to that divine Authority that is stampt upon all their *just* Laws and Commands; considering that in their several Degrees, they represent the Person of the great Sovereign of the World to whom we owe an intire Subjection, and consequently are in every thing to be *obeyed* and *submitted* to, that he hath not expresly *countermanded*. For that Subjects and Superiours should thus behave themselves towards one anothers is indispensably necessary to the Welfare of all Societies. For whilst the inferiours of any Society do obstinately refuse to submit to the Will of their Superiours, and the Superiours to condescend to the Common good of their Inferiours, they are contending together, either for a *Confusion* or a *Tyranny*; and if the Superiours prevail, Tyranny follows; if the Inferiours, Confusion; either of which is extreamly mischievous, not only to the Society in general, but to each of the contending Parties.

For

For if *Confuſion* follows, 'tis not only the Superiour Party ſuffers by being *depoſed* from his Authority, but the Inferiour too by being *deprived* of Protection, and expoſed to one anothers *Rapine* and *Violence*; and if *Tyranny* follows, 'tis not only the Inferiour Party ſuffers by being forced upon a *rigorous* and *uneaſie* Obedience, but the Superiour too, by being continually perplexed how to *force* and *extort* that Obedience; and thus both Parties ſuffer under the bad effects of each others Miſdemeanour. So that to make our Society happy, it is neceſſary, that whether we be Superiours or Inferiours, we ſhould be of a *gentle*, *yielding* and *treatable* Temper, that ſo which Rank ſoever we are placed in, we may be *pliable* either way, to a *fair* Condeſcenſion, or a *juſt* Submiſſion. For whilſt we are of *obſtinate*, *perverſe*, and *untractable* Tempers, we are neither fit to be Superiours nor Inferiours, but muſt neceſſarily be Plagues and Grievances to our Society, which Rank or Order ſoever we are placed in. And though in this life we have not always ſuch a ſenſible Experience of the Evil and Miſchief of this *malignant* Temper, becauſe now it is counter-influenced by thoſe more *meek* and *auſpicious* ones that are in Conjunction with it; yet when we go into Eternity, we ſhall be confined to ſuch a Society of Spirits as are all *throughout* of our own Genius and Temper. For as in the Society of the Bleſſed there is a Conjunction of every *Virtue* in every Member; ſo there is of every *Vice* in the Society of the Wicked; who do not only retain thoſe Vices in their Natures, which they were here inclined and addicted to, but are alſo con-

tinually excited to all other Vices they are capable of, by their inveterate Enmity against God, which in that miserabe estate is perpetually enraged, by their despair of being ever reconciled to him. So that whatsoever wicked Temper we carry with us into Eternity, we shall be sure to meet with it in every individual Member of the Society of the Wicked, and consequently if we carry thither with us a *perverse* and *untreatable* Temper that will not endure either to *submit* or *condescend*, we shall be sure to find the same Humour reigning throughout all the Society of the Wicked. And then being eternally united to it, (as we must expect to be if we are allyed to it by Nature) in what a miserable state shall we be, when every Member of our Society shall be of the same *unconversable* Temper with our selves, and we shall find none that will *comply with*, or endeavour to *sooth* and *mollifie* our Obstinacy; when all our whole Society shall consist of a Company of *stiff* and *Stubborn* Spirits, that will neither *submit to*, nor *bear with* one another, but every one will have his will upon every one, so far as he is able to force and extort it; when those that are superiour in Might and Power, do all rule with a *fierce* and *tyrannical* Will, and will *condescend* to nothing that is beneficial for their Subjects; and those that are inferiour do obey with a *perverse* and *stubborn* Heart, and will submit to nothing but what they are *forced* and *compelled* to, and 'tis nothing but meer Power and Dread by which they *rule* and are *ruled:* In a word, when they all mutually *hate* and *abominate* each other, and those that *command* are a company of *cruel* and *imperious* Devils

Devils that impoſe nothing but Grievances and Plagues, and thoſe that *obey* are a Company of *ſurly* and *untractable* Slaves, that ſubmit to nothing but what they are *driven to* by Plagues; ſo that *Plagues* and *Grievances*, are both the Matter and the Motive of all their Obedience and Subjection; when this, I ſay, is the State of their Society with one another, how is it poſſible but that they ſhould be all of them in a moſt *wretched* and *miſerable* Condition? For where all is tranſacted by *Force* and *Compulſion* (as to be ſure all is among ſuch a Company of *perverſe* and *ſelf-willed* Spirits) there every one muſt be ſuppoſed to be, ſo far as he is able, a Fury and a Devil to every one; and thoſe that *do compel* are like ſo many ſalvage Tyrants continually vexed and enraged with *ſtubborn* Oppoſitions and Reſiſtances, and thoſe that *are compelled*, like ſo many obſtinate Gally-Slaves, are continually *laſhed* into an inſufferable obedience, and forced by *one* Torment to ſubmit to *another*; and thus all their Society with one another is a perpetual Intercourſe of mutual *Outrage* and *Violence*.

This being therefore the miſerable Fate and Iſſue of a *perverſe*, and *ſtubborn*, and *untractable* Temper, the Goſpel, whoſe great deſign is to direct us to our Happineſs, doth induſtriouſly endeavour to root it out of our Minds, and to plant in its room a *gentle*, *obſequious* and *condeſcending* diſpoſition. For hither tend all thoſe Evangelical Precepts which require us *to become weak to the weak that we may gain them*, 1 Cor. ix. 22. *to bear with their infirmities*, Rom. xv. 2. *and ſupport them, and be patient towards them*, 1 Theſſ. v. 14. And

on the other hand, *to ſubmit our ſelves to our Elders*, 1 Pet. v. 5. *and to thoſe that have the rule over us*, Heb. xiii. 17. *to obey our Magiſtrates, our Parents, and our Maſters, to be ſubject to Principalities, and not ſpeak evil of Dignities, to honour Kings, and ſubmit to their Laws and Governours*, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. In a word, *to honour all men as they deſerve*, 1 Pet. ii. 17. *and to hold good men in Reputation*, Phil. ii. 19. *and in honour to prefer one another*, Rom. xii. 10. The ſenſe of all which is, to oblige us to treat all men as becomes us, in the Rank and Station, we are placed in; to *honour* thoſe that are our *Superiours* whether in Place or Virtue, to give that modeſt Deference to their Judgments, that Reverence to their Perſons, that Reſpect to their Virtues, and Homage to their Deſires or Commands, which the degree or kind of their Superiority requires; to *condeſcend* to thoſe that are our *Inferiours*, and treat them with all that Candour and Ingenuity, Sweetneſs and Affability, that the reſpective diſtances of our State will allow; to conſult their Conveniencies, and do them all good Offices, and pity and bear with their Infirmities, ſo far as they are *ſafely* and *wiſely* tolerable. By the conſtant Practice of which, our minds will be gradually cured of all that *perverſeneſs* and *ſurlineſs* of Temper, which indiſpoſes us to the reſpective Duties of our Relations; of all that *Contempt* and *Selfiſhneſs* which renders us averſe to the proper Duty of Superiours, and of all that *Self-Conceit* and *Impatience of Command*, which indiſpoſes us to the duty of Inferiours. And our Wills being once wrought into an eaſie *pliableneſs*, either to *Submiſſion* or *Condeſcenſion*, we are in a forward Preparation

Preparation of Mind to live under the Government of Heaven, where doubtleſs under God the ſupreme Lord and Sovereign, there are numberleſs degrees of Superiority and Inferiority. For ſome are ſaid to reap *ſparingly* and ſome *abundantly*, ſome to be Rulers of *five* Cities, and ſome of *ten*, ſome to be the *leaſt*, and ſome the *greateſt* in the Kingdom of Heaven; all which implies, that in that bleſſed State, there is a great Variety of degrees of Glory and Advancement. And indeed it cannot be otherwiſe in the Nature of the thing; for our Happineſs conſiſting in the Perfection of our Natures, the more or leſs *perfect* we are, the more or leſs *happy* we muſt neceſſarily be; for every farther degree of Goodneſs we attain to, is a *widening* and *enlargement* of our Souls for farther degrees of Glory and Beatitude. And accordingly when we arrive at Heaven, which is the Element of Beatitude, we ſhall all be filled according to the *Content* and *Meaſure* of our Capacities, and drink in more or leſs of its Rivers of Pleaſure, as we are more or leſs *enlarged* to contain them. So that according as we do more and more improve our ſelves in true Goodneſs, we do naturally make more and more room in our Souls for Heaven, which doth always fill the Veſſels of Glory of all ſizes, and pour in happineſs upon them till they all overflow and can contain no more. Since therefore they are all of them entirely reſigned to, and guided by right Reaſon, there is no doubt but in theſe their different degrees of Glory and Dignity, they mutually behave themſelves towards one another, as is moſt *fit* and *becoming*; and that ſince under God the

Head and King of their Society, there is from the highest to the lowest a most exact and regular Subordination of Members, they do every one perform their Parts and Duties towards every one, in all those different Stations of Glory they are placed in, and consequently do *submit* and *condescend* to each other, according as they are of a *superiour* or *inferiour* Class and Order. So that if when we go from hence into the other World, we carry along with us a *submissive* and *condescending* Frame of Spirit, we shall be trained up, and prediſposed to live under the blessed *Hierarchy* of Heaven; to yield a chearful Conformity to the Laws and Customs of it; and to render all the Honours to those *above*, and all the Condescensions to those *beneath* us in Glory, which the Statutes of that Heavenly Regiment do require; in doing whereof we shall all of us enjoy a most unspeakable Content and Felicity. For though in the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as the Kingdoms of the Earth, there are numberless Degrees of Advancement, and Dignity, and one Star *there*, as well as *here*, differeth from another Star in Glory; yet so *freely*, and *chearfully* do they all *condescend* and *submit* to each other, in these their respective differences of Rank and Station, that in the widest distances of their State, and Degrees of Glory, they all maintain the dearest *Intimacies* and *Familiarities* with each other, and neither those that are Superiour are either *envied* for their Height, or *contemned* for their Familiarity, nor those that are Inferiour *despised* for their Meanness, or *oppressed* for their Weakness. For in that blessed State, every one being best *pleased* with what

what beſt becomes him, it is every ones *Joy* to behave himſelf towards every one as beſt becomes the Rank and Degree he is placed in; and thoſe that are *above*, do *glory* in condeſcending to thoſe that are *below* them, and thoſe that are *below*, do *triumph* in ſubmitting to thoſe that are *above* them; and thus in all thoſe differences of Glory and Dignity between them, they alternately *reverence* their Superiours, and *condeſcend* to their Inferiours, with the ſame *unforced* Freedom and Alacrity, and ſo do eternally converſe with one another (notwithſtanding all their diſtances) with the greateſt *Freedom*, and moſt endearing *Familiarity*.

And thus I have endeavoured to give you an account of the firſt ſort of *Means*, by which *Heaven* the great *End* of a *Chriſtian* is to be obtained; *viz.* the *proximate* and *immediate* ones, which comprehend the Practice of all thoſe Virtues, which as *Rational Creatures* related to *God* and *one another* we ſtand eternally obliged to; and ſhewed how they are all of them eſſential Parts of the *Chriſtian Life*, and how *Heaven* it ſelf conſiſts in the *Perfection* of them.

So that upon the whole, the beſt Definition I can give of the ſtate of Heaven is this, That it is the *everlaſting*, *perfect* Exerciſe of all thoſe *Humane*, *Divine*, and *Social* Virtues, which as *Rational Animals*, related to *God*, and all his *Rational Creation*, we are *indiſpenſibly* and *everlaſtingly* obliged to. And therefore ſince the only natural way, by which we can *acquire* and *perfect* theſe Virtues, is *Uſe* and *Practice*, it hence neceſſarily follows, that the *Practice* of them is the only *direct*

and *immediate* Means, by which that *Heavenly State* is to be purchased and obtained.

SECT. IV.

Wherein for a Conclusion of this Chapter, some Motives *and* Considerations *are proposed to perswade men to the Practice of these* Heavenly Virtues.

It having been largely shewn in the foregoing Sections, that the Practice of all those Virtues which are included in the *Heavenly* Part of the *Christian Life* tends directly towards the heavenly State, and naturally grows up into it; I shall now briefly conclude this Argument with some *Motives* to perswade men to the Practice of them. And these I shall deduce.

1. From the *Suitableness* of them to our present *State* and *Relation.*
2. From the *Dignity.*
3. From the *Freedom.*
4. From the *Pleasure.*
5. From the *Ease.*
6. And lastly, From the *Necessity* of them.

I. Therefore let us consider the *Suitableness* of these Virtues to our present *State* and *Relation.* For in our Baptism, wherein we gave up our Names to Christ, we became *Denizons* and *Freemen* of Heaven, and were received into a Covenant that upon Performance of our Part of it actually intitled us to all its blessed *Privileges* and *Immunities.* So that in that sacred Solemnity of our Initiation into the Christian Covenant, we contracted a strict Alliance with the blessed People

ple of Heaven, and became their *Brethren* and *Fellow-Citizens*. For ſo the Apoſtle tells us, *Epheſ.* ii. 19. *Now therefore ye are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God*; and *the houſhold of God* conſiſts of the whole Congregation of the Saints, whether *militant* upon Earth, or *triumphant* in Heaven. For ſo, *Eph.* iii. 15. it is called *the whole family of Heaven and Earth.* So that we are Confederates with them in the ſame Covenant, even that by which they hold all the Joys and Glories they are poſſeſſed of; and if we will do as they have done, that is, perform the Conditions of it, we ſhall be Cohabitants with them in the ſame Glory. We are adopted Children of the ſame Father with them, Members of the ſame Family, Coheirs of the Promiſe of the ſame Glory, Brethren of the ſame Confraternity and Corporation; and all the difference between *them* and *us* is only this, that we are *abroad*, and they *at home*; we are on *this*, and they on t'*other* ſide *Jordan*; we in the *Acqueſt*, and they in the *Poſſeſſion* of the heavenly *Canaan*; to which we are intitled as well as they, and that by the ſame Grant from the ſupreme Proprietor. So that by calling our ſelves *Chriſtians*, we do in other words call our ſelves *Brethren*, *Co-heirs*, and *Fellow-Citizens*, with the bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven. And what can be more *ſuitable* to ſuch a Profeſſion than for us to live as they do, and the continued Practice of all theſe *heavenly Virtues?* And what a ſhame will it be for us, that are by Profeſſion their Brethren, not to *copy* and *imitate* their Behaviour; that we who are below ſtairs in the ſame

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Houſe and Family ſhould abandon our ſelves to *Senſuality* and *Deviliſhneſs*, whilſt our bleſſed Kindred above are entertaining themſelves with thoſe Heavenly Pleaſures which reſult from the perfect Exerciſe of all *Heavenly Virtue*; that we ſhould be *neglecting*, *provoking*, and *blaſpheming* God, whilſt they are *contemplating* and *admiring*, *loving* and *praiſing*, *imitating* and *obeying* him; that we ſhould be *cheating* and *defrauding*, *envying* and *deſpiſing*, *maligning* and *embroyling* one another, whilſt they are converſing together with the greateſt *Freedom* and *Integrity*, with the moſt obliging *Reſpects* and *Condeſcenſions*, and in the ſtricteſt *Unity* and deareſt *Friendſhip?* What a vile Reproach are our wicked Lives to the Converſation of theſe our *Fellow-Citizens* above? For while we profeſs our ſelves their *Brethren*, thoſe who underſtand no better will be prone to ſuſpect that *they* live as *we* do, and how would ſuch a ſuſpicion tempt an honeſt Heathen to renounce Heaven, as the *Indian* King did, when he was told that the bloody *Spaniards* went thither; and rather chuſe to go down to the darkeſt Hell, than to a Heaven that is peopled with ſuch *Diabolical* Company? So that by our *wicked* and *un-ſaint-like* Lives, we take an effectual Courſe to bring Heaven it ſelf into diſgrace, and to caſt ſuch a ſlander on its bleſſed Inhabitants, as may juſtly expoſe them to the Scorn and Hatred of all thoſe honeſt Minds that know them no otherwiſe than by us their *unworthy* and *degenerate* Fellow-Citizens; and could thoſe bleſſed Spirits look down from their Thrones of Bliſs, and ſee what a Company of *wretched* Chriſtians there are that claim *Kindred* with them, they would doubtleſs be

be aſhamed of the *Relation*, and count themſelves highly diſhonoured and diſgraced by it, and heartily wiſh that we would diſown our *ſins* or our *Baptiſm*, and openly renounce their *Alliance*, or more ſtrictly imitate their *Manners*. And really 'tis a burning ſhame that we ſhould profeſs our ſelves Fellow-Citizens with them for no other purpoſe but to *ſcandalize* and *reproach* them; and it were heartily to be wiſhed even for the *Credit* of Heaven and of our bleſſed Brethren that inhabit it, that if we will not be ſo *generous* as to follow their Example, we would at leaſt be ſo *honeſt* as to renounce their Kindred, and not claim a Relation to their Family meerly to *ſhame* and *diſgrace* them.

II. Conſider the *Honour* and *Dignity* of the heavenly Life. For if we may eſtimate Actions by the Examples from whence they are copied, as in other Caſes we are wont to do, doubtleſs the moſt *noble* and *honourable* are ſuch as are copied from the Lives of the glorious Inhabitants of Heaven. For beſides that ſublime Rank of Dignity whereunto they are advanced, as being the Courtiers and immediate Attendants of the Almighty Sovereign of Heaven and Earth; a Dignity which by how much more it excels that of the greateſt Potentate of this World, by ſo much more it *authorizes* the examples of thoſe that wear it; beſides this, I ſay, their Examples being the moſt perfect Copies and Imitations of the Life of God, are thereby rendred not only more *eminent* and *glorious*, but alſo more *obliging* and *authoritative*. For by following them, we follow God, who is the Standard of all rational Perfection, and who by being the firſt and beſt in the whole kind

of

of Rational Entities, is the ſupreme Rule and Meaſure of them all. So that in imitating the bleſſed People above, we imitate thoſe who in *their* Place and Station do live at the ſame Rate as the great God doth in *his*, and regulate themſelves by the ſame infallible Reaſon. We do what God himſelf would do if he were in *our* Place, and what the Son of God himſelf did do when he was in *our* Natures; and there is no other difference between *his* life and *ours*, but what neceſſarily ariſes out of our different States and Relations. And what more *glorious* thing can we do, than to live by the Pattern of *their* Lives, who live ſo exactly by the Pattern of God's? For the Example of living which thoſe bleſſed People ſet us, is the Example of God at *ſecond-hand*; 'tis his moſt rational Life *tranſcribed*, ſo far as it is rationally *imitable*, that is, ſo far as it is *honourable* and *glorious* for a rational Creature to tranſcribe it. For in the State of *finite* Creatures they live in a perfect Conformity to the ſame immutable Reaſon whereby God regulates himſelf in the State of an *infinite* Creator. So that their Example is an Imitation in kind of all thoſe particular Excellencies in him, which they *may* and *ought* to imitate; and 'tis an Imitation in general of that eternal *Decorum* with reſpect to Conditions and States, which he conſtantly obſerves in all his Tranſactions with his Creatures. And as their Example is a perfect Copy of God's, ſo 'tis a Copy fitted in all particulars for our Uſe and Imitation. For it doth not only deſcribe to us all thoſe particular *Excellencies* in him which are to be imitated by us, but all thoſe particular *Duties*

to

to which that Eternal Law of Equity and Goodneſs by which he governs *himſelf* in *his* State, requires of *us* in *ours*; and ſhews not only wherein we are to imitate him *in kind*, but alſo wherein we are to follow him *in general*, in doing what is moſt fit for us in the State and Relation of *Creatures*, even as he doth what is moſt fit for him in the State and Relation of a God and *Creator*. So that the Example of thoſe Heavenly Inhabitants is the Example of God himſelf, exactly fitted and attempered to the State and Condition of Creatures. For juſt as they live, the All-wiſe and All-good God himſelf would live, if he were in their State and Relation. Wherefore by imitating their Heavenly Lives and Manners, we do our ſelves the greateſt Right, and do moſt effectually conſult the *Glory* and *Honour* of our own Natures. For whilſt we tread in theirs, we tread in the Footſteps of God, and have his glorious Example to warrant and juſtifie our Actions; we behave our ſelves as it becomes the Children of the King of Heaven, and ſo far as it conſiſts with the condition of Creatures, we live like ſo many Gods in the World; which is doubtleſs the utmoſt height of *Honour* and *Glory* that any rational Ambition can aſpire to. So that methinks had we any ſpark of true Gallantry and Bravery of Mind in us, we ſhould deſpiſe all other kinds of Life but *this*, and pity thoſe gilded Bubbles that have nothing to boaſt of but their fine Cloaths, and great Eſtates, and empty Titles of Honour; we ſhould look upon all other Dignities as the trifling Play-games of Children in compariſon with *this*, of living like the great Nobility of Heaven,

Heaven, that do all live by the pattern of the Life of God.

III. Conſider the great *Freedom* and *Liberty* of a Heavenly Life. So long as we live *earthy* and *ſenſual* Lives, our free-born Souls are impriſoned in Senſe, and all their Motions are circumſcribed and bounded within the narrow Sphere of *ſenſitive* Goods and Enjoyments. So that when we would follow our Reaſon, and do as that preſcribes and dictates, we find our ſelves miſerably *hampered* and *intangled*; the Luſts of our Fleſh do hang like gyves ſo *heavily* upon us, that when ever our Reaſon and Conſcience call, we cannot move with any *Freedom*, but are fain to *labour* at every ſtep, and after a few faint eſſays are utterly *tired* under the weight of our *reluctant* inclinations. So that the good which many times we would, we do not, the Law in our Minds being counter-voted by the Law in our Members. Our Reaſon and Conſcience tell us that we ought to *love* God above all, to *adore* and *worſhip* him and ſurrender up our ſelves to his Command and Diſpoſal; and we are many times ſtrongly inclined to follow its dictates and directions; but alas when we come to put them in Execution, we find ſo many pull-backs within us, ſo many *ſtrong* and *ſtubborn* Averſions to our good Inclinations, that we have not the power to do as we would, or to diſpoſe of our ſelves according to our own moſt reaſonable Deſires, but like miſerable Slaves that are chained to the Oar, we are fain to row on whitherſoever our imperious Luſts do command us, though we plainly ſee we are running on a Rock, and invading our own deſtruction.

And

And as we are not free in this ill ſtate of life to follow our *Reaſon*, ſo neither are we free to follow our *Luſts*. For as when we would follow our Reaſon, our Luſts *cling about* and *intangle* us; ſo when we would follow our Luſt, our Reaſon *clogs* and *reſtrains* us; and by objecting to us the *Indecency* and *Danger*, the infinite *Turpitude* and *Hazard* of our ſinful Courſes, lays ſo many rubs in our way that we cannot ſin with any Freedom, but whitherſoever we go we walk like Priſoners with the Shackles of *Shame* and *Fear* on our heels; ſo that which way ſoever we turn our ſelves, we find that our Power to diſpoſe of our ſelves is under a great *Reſtraint* and *Confinement*, and we can neither get leave of our Luſts to follow our Reaſon, nor of our Reaſon to follow our Luſts. For when we attempt the *latter*, our Reaſon curbs us with *Shame* and *Fear*; and when we endeavour the *former*, our Appetite bridles us with *Diſlike* and *Averſation*. In this extremity therefore what is to be done that we may be *free?* Why, the caſe is plain, we muſt reſolve to conquer either our Reaſon or our Luſts: if we conquer our Reaſon, (which we ſhall find by far the *harder* Task of the two) we ſhall acquire the Freedom of *Devils* and *Brutes*, the Freedom to do Miſchief, and wallow in the mire without Shame or Remorſe; but if we conquer our Luſts, we acquire the Freedom of *Men*; yea of *Saints* and of *Angels*; the freedom to act reaſonably without Reluctance or Averſation; and this being much more *eaſily* to be acquired than the former, I dare appeal to any man's Reaſon which of the two is in it ſelf moſt eligible. If therefore we would vindicate our *rational*

Freedom

Freedom, we muſt reſolve to ſhake off thoſe ſlaviſh Fetters, our *brutiſh* and our *deviliſh* Appetites, that do ſo perpetually *turmoil* and *incumber* us in all our virtuous Attempts and rational Operations; we muſt tie up our ſelves from executing their Commands, and ſerving their wicked Wills and Pleaſures, and heartily reſolve to act as it becomes us in the Capacity of rational Creatures related to *God* and *one another*. And then though *at firſt* we muſt expect to find our ſelves *confined* and *ſtraitned* by our vicious Averſations, we ſhall be immediately releaſed from all that *Shame* and *Fear* which did ſo continually curb us in the Career of our Wickedneſs; and even our *vicious* Averſations (if we couragiouſly perſiſt in our *good* Reſolution) will grow weaker and weaker, and be every day leſs and leſs cumberſome to us, till it is *totally* extinguiſhed. And then we ſhall feel our ſelves entirely reſtored into our own Power, and be able, without *Check* or *Controul*, to diſpoſe of our ſelves and all our Motions, according as it ſhall ſeem to us moſt *fit* and *reaſonable*; then we ſhall act with the greateſt Vigour and Freedom, having no counter-ſtriving Principles to *reſtrain* or *retard* us, no vicious Averſations on the one ſide, or guilty Shame or Fear on the other, to *counterpoize* us in our rational Motions; then we ſhall move without Check or Confinement in a large and noble Sphere, for we ſhall be pleaſed with what is *fit*, and *wiſe*, and *good*, without any Reſerve or Exception, and we ſhall do what we pleaſe without any *Lett* or *Hindrance*. So that by ingaging our ſelves in the *Heavenly Life*, we enter into a ſtate of glorious *Liberty*, and if we conſtantly perſiſt

perſiſt in it, and do ſtill *prevalently* liſt to live as becomes us, we ſhall be more and more free to live as we *liſt*, till at laſt we are arrived into a perfect Liberty, wherein we ſhall live without Reſtraint or Controul, without check of Conſcience, or reluctance of Inclination, which are the two main Bars that *confine* and *ſtraiten* men in their Operations. If therefore we would ever be *free*, let us immediately come off from our vicious Courſes to the Practice of this divine and heavenly Life, wherein by degrees, if we courageouſly hold on, we ſhall wear off thoſe Shackles that do ſo miſerably hamper and intangle us; and then we ſhall be intirely free to do whatſoever our Reaſon dictates to us; then we ſhall *run the ways of God's Commandments*, and, like our bleſſed Brethren above, be all Life and Spirit, and Wing, in the diſcharge of our Duty to Him.

IV. Conſider the *Pleaſure* of this *Heavenly Life*. 'Tis true, there is a ſort of Pleaſure that reſults from all the Acts of a *ſenſual* and *earthly* Converſation; but we find by Experience, that though in the purſuit it ſtrangely *allures* and *inchants* us, yet in the Fruition it always *diſappoints* our expectation, and ſcarce *performs* in the Enjoyment one half of what it *promiſed* to our Hope; and at the beſt 'tis but a *preſent* and *tranſient* Satisfaction of our *brutiſh* Senſe, a Satisfaction that *dims* the Light, *ſullies* the Beauty, *impairs* the Vigour, and *reſtrains* the Activity of the Mind; diverting it from *better* Operations, and indiſpoſing it to the fruition of *purer* Delights; leaving no *comfortable* Reliſh, or *gladſom* Memory behind it, but oftentimes *going out* in a ſtink, and *determining*

in Bitterneſs, Regret and Diſgrace. But in each act of this divine and celeſtial Life, there is ſomething of the *Pleaſure* of *Heaven*, ſomething of thoſe *divine* Refreſhments and conſolations upon which the good People of Heaven do live. For the greateſt part of their Heaven ſprings from within their own Boſoms, even from the Conformity of their Souls to the Heavenly State, and the ſprightful out-goings of their Minds and affections towards the heavenly Objects; from their *contemplating* and *loving*, their *praiſing* and *adoring* the moſt high God, from their *Imitation* of his Perfections, their *Subjection* to his Will, and *Dependence* on his Veracity; all which Acts, as I have already ſhewed, have the moſt *raviſhing* Pleaſures appendant to them, and are ſo neceſſary to the Felicity of Rational Creatures, that the Wit of Man cannot fancy a *rational* Heaven without them. For the Heaven of a *rational* Creature conſiſting in the moſt *intenſe* and *vigorous* Exerciſe of its *rational* Faculties about the moſt *ſuitable* and *convenient* Objects, what Object can be more convenient to ſuch Faculties than that Almighty Sovereign of Beings, whoſe *Power* is the Spring of all *Truth*, and whoſe *Nature* is the Pattern of all *Goodneſs*. So that without a perfect Union of our Minds, and Wills, and Affections with God, there can be no poſſible *Idea* of a Perfect Heaven of Rational Pleaſures, but in this bleſſed Union lies the very *Soul* and *Quinteſſence* of Heaven. Since therefore in every Act of every Virtue of the Divine Life, there is at leaſt an imperfect Union of the Soul with God, it neceſſarily follows, that there muſt be ſome degree of the Pleaſure of Heaven

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in every one. So that if we do not experience much greater Joy and Delight in the Acts of this divine Life than ever we did in the higheſt Epicuriſms and Senſualities, 'tis not becauſe there are not much greater in them, but becauſe we never exerted them with that *Sprightlineſs* and *Vigour* as we do our ſenſual Appetites and Perceptions; becauſe we are *clogg'd* in the Exerciſe of them, either by *falſe* Principles, or *bodily* Indiſpoſitions, or *ſinful* Averſations. But if we would take the pains to *inure* and *accuſtom* our ſelves to theſe heavenly Acts, we ſhould find by degrees they would grow *natural* and *eaſie* to us; and our Souls would be ſo *habituated*, *contempered*, and *diſpoſed* to them, that we ſhould upon all Occaſions exert them with great Freedom and Inlargement: And then we ſhould begin to feel and reliſh the Pleaſure of them; then we ſhould perceive a Heaven of Delights ſpringing up from within us, and unfolding it ſelf in each beatifical Act of our heavenly Converſation; then we ſhould find our ſelves under the *central* force of Heaven moſt ſweetly drawn along and attracted thither by the powerful Magnetiſm of its Joys and Pleaſures; and in every act of our celeſtial Behaviour, we ſhould have ſome Foretaſte of the celeſtial happineſs. So that now we ſhould no longer need external Arguments to convince us of the Truth and Reality of that bleſſed State; for we ſhould feel it within our ſelves, and be able to penetrate into its bleſſed Myſteries by the light of an infallible Experience. Now we ſhould have no Occaſion to ſearch the *Records* of Heaven to aſſure our ſelves of our intereſt in it; for by a moſt *ſenſible* Earneſt

of Heaven within us, we ſhould be as *fully* ſatisfied of our Title to it, as if one of the winged Meſſengers of Heaven ſhould come down from thence and tell us that he ſaw our Names *inrolled* in the Book of Life. And with this ſweet Experience of Heaven within us we ſhould go on to Heaven with unſpeakable Triumph and Alacrity, being tolled all along from ſtep to ſtep with the alluring Reliſhes of its Joys and Pleaſures; and in every vigorous Exerciſe of every Virtue of the Heavenly Life, we ſhould have ſuch lively *taſts* and *ſenſations* of Heaven, as would continually excite us to exerciſe them more *vigorouſly*; and ſtill the more *vigorouſly* we exerted them, the *more* of Heaven we ſhould taſte in them; and ſo the *Vigour* of our Virtue would increaſe the *Pleaſure* of it, and the *Pleaſure* of it increaſe its *Vigour*, till both are perfected and grown up into the bleſſed State of Heaven. Wherefore as we do love Pleaſure, which is the great Invitation to Action, let us be perſuaded once for all to make a through Experiment of the *heavenly Life*; and if upon a ſufficient Trial you do not find it the moſt *pleaſant* kind of Life that ever you led, if you do not experience a far more noble Satisfaction in it than ever you did in all your *ſtudied* and *artificial* Luxuries, I give you leave to brand me for an Impoſtor.

V. Conſider the great *Repoſe* and *Eaſe* of a Heavenly Life and Converſation. In every *ſenſual* and *deviliſh* Courſe of Life, we find by Experience there is a great deal of *Uneaſineſs* and *Diſquiet*. For the Mind is *diſturbed*, the Conſcience *galled*, the Affections *divided* into oppoſite Factions,

Factions, and the whole Soul in a moſt *diſeaſed* and *reſtleſs* Poſture. And indeed it is no Wonder it ſhould be ſo, ſince 'tis in an *unnatural* State and Condition. For whilſt 'tis in any unreaſonable Courſe of Action, the very Frame and Conſtitution of it, as it is, a rational Being, ſuffers an unnatural Violence, and is all *unjointed* and *diſordered*. And therefore as a Body when its Bones are *out*, is never at reſt till they are ſet again; ſo a rational Soul when its Faculties and Powers are *diſlocated* and put out of their *natural*, i. e. *rational* Courſe of Action, is continually *reſtleſs* and *diſturbed*, and always *toſſing* to and fro, *ſhifting* from one Poſture to another, *turning* it ſelf from this to t'other Object and Enjoyment, but finding no eaſe or ſatisfaction in *any*, till 'tis reſtored again to its own rational Courſe of Motion, and that is to act and move towards God, for whom it was made, and in whom alone it can be happy. And if its Reaſon were not ſtrangely *dozed* and *ſtupified* with Senſe and ſenſitive Pleaſure, it would doubtleſs be a thouſand times more *reſtleſs* and *diſſatisfied* in this its preternatural State than it is; it would feel much more diſtraction of Mind, Anguiſh of Conſcience, and Tumult of Affections than tis now capable of, amidſt the numerous Enjoyments and Diverſions of this World. For as a muſical Inſtrument, were it a living thing, would doubtleſs be ſenſible of *Harmony* as its proper State (as a great Author of our own ingeniouſly diſcourſes) and abhor *Diſcord* and *Diſſonancy* as a thing preternatural to it; even ſo were our Reaſon but *alive* and *awake* within us, our Souls, which according to their natural Frame

were made *Uniſon* with God, would be *exquiſitely* ſenſible of thoſe divine Virtues wherein its *Conſonancy* conſiſts, as of that which is its proper State and native Complexion; and complain as ſadly of the *vicious* Diſtempers of its Faculties, as the Body doth of *Wounds* and *Diſeaſes*; 'twould be perfectly *ſick* of every unreaſonable Motion, and never be able to *reſt* till its *disjoynted* Faculties were *rectified*, and all its *diſordered* Strings ſet *in tune* again. Which being once effected (as it will *quickly* be in a continued Courſe of heavenly Action) we ſhall preſently find our Souls disburthened of all thoſe *malignant* Humours that do ſo perpetually *diſeaſe*, *diſquiet*, and *diſturb* us. For by *relying* upon God, we ſhall totally quit and diſcharge our ſelves of all thoſe reſtleſs Cares and Anxieties which circle and prick us like a Crown of Thorns; by our hearty *Submiſſion* to his heavenly Will, we ſhall eaſe our Conſciences of all that Horrour, Rage, and Anguiſh which proceeds from the invenomed Stings of our Guilt; by *loving*, *admiring*, and *adoring* Him, our Affections will be cured of all that Inconſiſtence and inordinacy that render them ſo *tumultuous* and *diſquieting*. And theſe things being once accompliſhed, the *ſick* and *reſtleſs* Soul will preſently find it ſelf in perfect *Health* and *Eaſe*. For now all her jarring Faculties being tuned to the muſical Laws of Reaſon, there will be a perfect Harmony in her Nature, and ſhe will have no diſquieting Principle within her; nothing but *calm* and *gentle* Thoughts, *ſoft* and *ſweet* Reflections, *tame* and *manageable* Affections, nothing but what abundantly contributes to her *Repoſe* and *Satisfaction*. So that do

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but imagine what an eaſe the Body enjoys when after a lingring Sickneſs it recovers a ſound Conſtitution, and feels a lively Vigour poſſeſſing every Part and actuating the Whole; ſuch and much more is the Eaſe and Quiet of the Soul, when by the diligent Practice of the heavenly Life it feels it ſelf recovered from the languiſhing Sickneſs of a ſenſual and deviliſh Nature. Now ſhe is no more *toſſed* and *agitated* in a ſtormy Sea of reſtleſs Thoughts and guilty reflections, no more *ſcorched* with Impatience, or *drowned* with Grief, or *ſhook* with Fear, or *bloated* with Pride or Ambition, but all her Affections are reſigned to the bleſſed Empire of a ſpiritual Mind, and cloathed in the Livery of her Reaſon. Now all the War and Conteſt between the Law in her *Members*, and the Law in her *Mind*, is ended in a glorious Victory and happy Peace; and thoſe *divided* Streams, her Will and Conſcience, her paſſions and her Reaſon are united in *one Channel*, and flow towards *one* and the ſame *Ocean*. And being thus joynted and knit together by the Ties and Ligaments of Virtue, the Soul is perfectly well and eaſie, and enjoys a moſt ſweet *Repoſe* within it ſelf. Wherefore as you value your own Reſt and Eaſe, and would not be endleſsly *turmoiled* and *diſquieted*, be perſwaded heartily to ingage your ſelves in the Courſe of a heavenly Converſation; and then, though at firſt you muſt expect to find ſome *Difficulty* in it, by reaſon of its Contrariety to your corrupt Natures, yet if you vigorouſly *perſiſt* in it, you will find the Difficulty will ſoon *wear off*, and then 'twill be *all* Eaſe and Pleaſure. For when our Nature is depraved, either by *Senſuality* or

Deviliſhneſs, 'tis like a Bone out of joint, full of Pain while it is *out*, and much more painful while it is *ſetting*, but as ſoon as *that* is done, 'tis immediately *well* and *eaſie*.

VI. And laſtly, Conſider the abſolute *Neceſſity* of this heavenly Life and Converſation. For beſides that God exacts it of us as an indiſpenſible Condition of our Happineſs, and hath aſſured us, that *if we live after the fleſh we ſhall die*, and that *without holineſs we ſhall never ſee the Lord*; beſides this, I ſay, an heavenly Converſation is in the Nature of the thing *neceſſary* to qualifie us for Heaven, or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*. For Happineſs being a *relative* thing, implies in the very Nature of it a mutual *Correſpondence* between the *Objects* which preſent us with happineſs, and the *Faculties* which taſte and enjoy them; and be the Objects never ſo good in themſelves, never ſo pregnant with pleaſure and Bliſs, yet if they do not *agree* with the Faculties whereunto they are objected, inſtead of *bleſſing*, they will but *afflict* and *torment* them; and if a Man were placed in the midſt of Heaven among all the *raviſhing* Fruitions with which that bleſſed place abounds; yet unleſs his Mind and Temper did *ſuit* and *agree* with them, they would be ſo many *Miſeries* and *Vexations* to him, and he would be *afflicted* even in *Abraham's* Boſom, and grope for *Heaven* in the midſt of *Paradiſe*. So that ſuppoſing that God were ſo unreaſonably *fond* of the Happineſs of wicked Souls, as to prefer it before the honour of His Government, and the Purity of his Nature, and the Sanction of his Laws,

Laws, yet ſtill there is an *invincible* Obſtacle behind, that muſt render their future Felicity *impoſſible*; and that is, that it cannot be without a plain *Contradiction* to the Nature of things, the Temper of wicked Souls being wholly *repugnant* to all the Felicities of the other world. So that if they were all ſet before them, they would not be able to enjoy them, but muſt be forced to *pine* and *famiſh* amidſt all that plenty of Delights, there being no viand in all that Heavenly Entertainment that they would reliſh any ſweetneſs in. And therefore if God ſhould ſo far pardon them, as not to puniſh them himſelf by any immediate ſtroke of Vengance, *that* would be the *utmoſt* Favour that His Omnipotent Goodneſs could do for them whilſt they continued in their Sins; which notwithſtanding ſuch a Pardon, would for ever continue them extremely miſerable. And what great matter doth a Pardon ſignifie to a Malefactor that is dying of the Stone or Strangury? He could but have died though he had not *been* pardoned, and die he muſt though he *be*. And juſt as little almoſt would it ſignifie to a depraved Soul to be pardoned and abſolved by God, whilſt it hath a Diſeaſe within that preys upon its Vitals, and haſtens it on to a certain Ruine. For it could have been but miſerable in the future Life, if it had not been pardoned, and miſerable it muſt be, if it continue wicked, whether it be pardoned or no. For it is not ſo much the Place as the State that makes either Heaven or Hell; and the State of Heaven and Hell conſiſts in perfect *Holineſs* and *Wickedneſs*; and proportionably as we do improve in either of theſe, ſo we do approach towards the

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one State or the *other*. For as Heaven is the center of all that is *virtuous*, *pure*, and *holy*, and all that is *good* tends thither by a natural Sympathy; ſo Hell is the center of all *Impiety* and *Wickedneſs*, and all that is *bad* doth naturally preſs and ſink down thither, as towards its proper Place and Element; and ſhould not the divine Vengeance concern it ſelf to exclude wicked Souls out of Heaven yet their own wickedneſs would do it. For that is a Place of ſuch inacceſſible Light and Purity, that no Impurity or Wickedneſs can approach it, but muſt of neceſſity be beaten off with the dreadful Lightnings of its Glory, and tumbled headlong down as oft as it eſſays to climb up thither; as on the other hand, ſhould not God by an immediate Vengeance precipate wicked Souls into Hell, yet their own Wickedneſs by the mighty weight of its own Nature, would inevitably Preſs and ſink them down into that miſerable Condition. What egregious Nonſenſe therefore is it, for wicked men to talk of going to heaven? Alas! poor Creatures, what would you do there? There are no wanton *Amours* among thoſe heavenly *Lovers*; no Rivers of *Wine* among their Rivers of *Pleaſure*, to gratifie your unbounded *Senſuality*; no *Paraſites* to flatter your lofty *Pride*; no *Miſeries* to feed your meagre *Envy*; no *Miſchiefs* to tickle your deviliſh *Revenge*; nothing but *chaſte* and *divine*, *pure* and *ſpiritual* Enjoyments, ſuch as your *brutiſh* and *deviliſh* Appetites will eternally *loath* and *nauſeate*. Wherefore if we mean to go to Heaven, and to be happy there, we muſt now endeavour to *diſpoſe* and *attemper* our Minds to it which is no other way to be done, but by leading a heavenly Life and

and Converſation; which by degrees will *habituate*, and *naturalize* our Souls to the heavenly Virtues, and ſo *work* and *inlay* them into the Frame and Temper of our Minds, that 'twill be our greateſt Pleaſure to be *exerting* and *exerciſing* them. And then our ſouls will be *dreſſed* and *made ready* for Heaven, and when we go from hence to take Poſſeſſion of its Joys, they will be all ſo agreeable to our *prepared* Appetites, that we ſhall preſently fall to and feed upon them with infinite Guſt and Reliſh. But till by living a heavenly Life we have diſpoſed our ſelves for Heaven, we are utterly incapable of enjoying it. So that now things are reduced to this Iſſue, that either of our *Sins* or our *Souls* muſt die, and we muſt neceſſarily ſhake hands either with *Heaven* or our *Luſts*. And therefore unleſs we value eternal Happineſs ſo little as to exchange it for the *ſordid* and *trifling* Pleaſures of Sin, and unleſs we love our *Sins* ſo well as to ranſom them with the Blood of our immortal Souls, it concerns us ſpeedily to engage our ſelves in this heavenly Life and Converſation. For this is an eternal and immutable Law, That if we will be *wicked*, we muſt be *miſerable*.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the militant *or* warfaring *Part of the Christian Life, by which we are to* acquire *and* perfect *the Heavenly Vertues; shewing how effectually all the Duties of it conduce thereunto.*

HAving, in the former Chapter, given a large Account of the *Heavenly Part* of the *Christian Life*, and shewn how *directly* and *immediately* the Practice of all the Vetrues that are comprehended in it tends to the Heavenly State, and how *naturally* they all grow into eternal Happiness; I shall, in the next Place, endeavour to give some brief Account of that Part of the *Christian Life* which is purely *militant*, and which wholly consists of those *Instrumental Duties*, by the Use of which we are to conquer the *difficulties* of those Heavenly Vertues, and to *acquire* and *perfect* them. Which Difficulties, as I shewed before, *Chap.* 2. are the inbred *Corruptions* of our own Nature, together with those manifold *Temptations* from without, by which they are continually *provoked* and *excited:* and so to *subdue* and *conquer* these, as that they may neither take us off *from*, nor clog and indispose us *in* the Exercise of the *Heavenly Vertues*, is the great design and Business of this *warfaring* Part of the *Christian Life.*

That I may therefore handle it distinctly, I shall divide it into Three Parts, and endeavour with

with as much Brevity as I can; Firſt, To *explain* the Duties of each Part, and to ſhew how they all conduce to our *conquering* the Difficulties of the *heavenly Vertues*; and to the *acquiring* and *perfecting* them; and, Secondly, To *preſs* the Duties of each Part with *proper* and *ſuitable* Arguments.

In this Part of our Chriſtian Life therefore there is,

1. our *Beginning* or *Entrance* into it, which is in Scripture called, *Repentance from dead works.*

2. Our *Courſe* and *Progreſs* in it, and this is nothing but a *holy life.*

3. Our *Perfecting* and *Conſummation* of it, and this is *final Perſeverance* in well-doing. Each of which have their proper and peculiar Duties, which I ſhall endeavour in this Chapter to *explain* and *inforce.*

SECT. I.

Concerning thoſe Duties that are proper to our Beginning *and* Entrance *into this* warfaring *Part of our Chriſtian Life; ſhewing how they all conduce to the* ſubduing *of Sin, and* acquiring *the Heavenly* Vertues.

This firſt Part of our *militant* Life being nothing but our *Initial* Repentance, or the firſt *turning* of our Souls to God from a ſtate of wilful Sin and Rebellion, the Duties that are proper to it, and by which this *turn* of our Souls is to be introduced and performed, may be reduced to theſe ſix Heads.

1. A hearty and firm *Belief* of the Truth of our *Religion.*

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2. A due *Consideration* of its *Motives*, and a balancing of them with the *Hardships* and *Difficulties* we are to undergo.

3. A Deep and through *Conviction* of our great need of a *Mediator*, to render us acceptable to God.

4. A hearty *Sorrow*, *Shame*, and *Remorse* for our Sins past.

5. Earnest *Prayer* to God for *Aid* and *Assistance* to enable us effectually to renounce them.

6. A serious and well weighed *Resolution* to forsake and abandon them for ever.

I. It is necessary to our good *Beginning* of this our *Christian Warfare*, that we should heartily *believe* the *Truth* and *Reality* of our *Religion*. For our hearty *Belief* of the Gospel is in Scripture represented as the main and principal Weapon by which we are to combate against the World and our own Lusts. And hence it is called *the sheild of faith*, and *the breast-plate of faith*, which are the two principal parts of Armour of *Defence*, denoting that an *hearty belief* of the Gospel is the principal *defence* of a *Christian* against all the *fiery darts* of Temptation; the Armor of Proof that guards our Innocence, and renders us invulnerable in all our Spiritual Conflicts. For, *above all things*, saith the Apostle, *take the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one*, Eph. 16. And as it is the principal part of our *defensive*, so it is also of our *offensive* Armour. For so we find all the Victories and Triumphs of those glorious Heroes, *Heb.* xi. attributed to this irresistible Weapon of their Faith. 'Twas by Faith that they despised Crowns, confronted the

the Anger of Kings, and triumphed over the bittereſt Torments and Afflictions; *by Faith that they wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained Promiſes, ſtopped the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of Fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, and out of weakeneſs were made ſtrong.* Nay, ſo great a ſhare hath *Faith* in the Succeſſes of our *Chriſtian Warfare*, that it is called by the Apoſtle, *the good fight of Faith*, 1 Tim. vi. 12. and St. *John* aſſures us, that *this is the victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*, 1 John v. 4.

For if we firmly *believe* the Goſpel, that will furniſh us with undeniable Anſwers to return to all Temptations, and enable us infinitely to *out-bid* the World, whatſoever it ſhould proffer us for our Innocence. For our *Belief* of the Goſpel carries in the one hand infinitely greater *Goods*, and in the other infinitely greater *Evils* to *allure* and *bind* us faſt to our Duty, than any the World can Propoſe to *entice* or *terrifie* us from it. For on the one hand it diſcovers to us thoſe immortal Regions of the Bleſſed, which are the proper Seat and pure Element of Happineſs; where the bleſſed Inhabitants live in a continued Fruition of their utmoſt wiſhes, being every moment entertained with freſh and inraviſhing Scenes of *Pleaſure*; where all their happineſs is *eternal*, and all their Eternity nothing elſe but one continued Act of *Love*, and *Praiſe*, and *Joy*, and *Triumph*; where there are no *Sighs* or *Tears*; no intermixtures of *Sorrow* or *Miſery*, but every Heart is full of *Joy*, and every Joy is a *Quinteſſence*, and every happy moment is crowned with ſome freſh and new Enjoyment. On the other hand it ſets before

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our Eyes a most *frightful* and *amazing* prospect of those dismal Shades of Horrour, where mighty numbers of condemned Ghosts perpetually wander to and fro, tormented with endless *Rage* and *Despair*; where they always *burn* without *consuming*, always *faint* but never *die*, being forced to languish out a long Eternity in unpitied Sighs and Groans. And after such a prospect as this, what *poor*, *inconsiderable* Trifles will all the Goods and Evils of this World appear to us? but yet unless we *believe* the Reality of them, how great soever they may be in *themselves*, they will signifie no more to our *Hope* and *Fear* (which are the Master-Springs of our Action) than if they were so many golden *Dreams*, or lifeless *Scare-Crows*. For all Proposals of Good and Evil do work upon the Minds of Men proportionably as they are *believed* and *assented* to; and as that which is not *true*, is *not*, so that which we do not *believe*, is to us as if it were *not*. How then is it possible we should be moved by that Good or Evil which we do not *believe*, and in which, by consequence, we cannot apprehend our selves *concerned*.

Wherefore in our *entrance* into the *Christian Warfare*, it is highly necessary that we do not take up our Faith at a *venture*, and believe *winking*, without knowing *why* or *wherefore*; but that we should, so far as we are able, impartially examine the *Evidences* of our Religion, and search into the *Grounds* of its *Credibility*, that so we may be able to give some Reason to *our selves* and *others*, of the *Hope* that is in us. For which End it will be needful that we should read, and impartially consider, some of the *Apologies* for the *Christian*

Christian Religion; of which we have sundry excellent ones in our own Language; * and if we will but take the pains to instruct our selves in the *plain* and *easie* Evidences of *Christianity*, we shall quickly see abundant cause to assent to it; and then our Faith, being founded on a firm Basis of Reason, will be able to bid defiance to the World, and to out-stand the most furious Storms of Temptation.

* Dr. *Stillingfleet's* Origines. Dr. *Patrick's* Translation of *Grotius*. Sir *Charles Wolsely*.

II. To our good *Beginning* of this our *Christian Warfare*, it is also necessary that we should duly *consider* the *Motives* of our Religion, and balance them with the *Hardships* and *Difficulties* we are to undergo. For thus our Saviour makes *Consideration* a necessary Introduction to our *Christian Warefare*, *Luke* xiv. 28. where he compares mens rushing headlong into the Difficulties of the Christian Life without Consideration, to a Man's resolving to build a Tower without computing the Charge of it, or a King's going to War without ever considering before-hand whether with his Army of Ten Thousand he be able to encounter his Enemy with Twenty. By both which Comparisons he intimates to us the unprosperous Issue of Mens listing themselves under his Banner to combate the Devil, the World, and their own Lusts, without ever considering before-hand either their *own* strength or their *Enemies*, the Arguments with which they must fight, or the Difficulties that will *cross* and *oppose* them. So that when they come to execute their rash Resolutions, there start up so many Difficulties in their way which

they never *thought of*, and againſt which they took no care to *fore-arm* themſelves, that they have not the Heart and Courage to ſtand before them, but after a few faint Attempts are preſently ſounding a cowardly Retreat.

For indeed *Conſideration* is the Life and Soul of Faith, that *animates and actuates* its Principles, and *elicites* and *draws forth* all their natural Power and Energy. And let the Truths we believe be never ſo *weighty* and *momentous* in themſelves, never ſo apt to *ſpirit* and *invigorate* us, yet unleſs we ſeriouſly *conſider* and *apply* them to our Wills and Affections, and take the pains to extract out of them their native Vigour and Efficacy, and to infuſe it into our Faculties and Powers, they will lie like ſo many dead Notions in our Minds, and never impart to us the leaſt Degree of Spiritual Courage and Activity. And accordingly our Saviour attributes the ill Succeſs of God's Word in the Hearts of Men (which he compares to the *high-way*, the *ſtony* and *thorny* Ground) either to their not conſidering it *at all*, or to their not conſidering it *deeply* enough, or to their not conſidering it *long* enough. Either the divine Truths which they heard went no farther than their Ears, and ſo lay openly expoſed like ſo many looſe corns upon the high-way to be picked up by the Fowls of the Air; or if it entred into their Mind and Conſideration, it was ſo *ſlightly* and *ſuperficially*, that like Corn ſown in a rocky ground, it had not Depth enough to take root, to *faſten* and *grow* into their minds, and *digeſt* into Principles of Action; or if they at preſent received it into their deeper and more ſerious Conſideration, it

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was but for *a little while*, for by and by they permit their Worldly Cares and Pleaſures, like Thorns, to ſpring up in their Thoughts and choak it, before it was arrived to any Maturity. But that which rendred it ſo *proſperous* and *fruitful* in good and honeſt Hearts, was, that having heard the Word they *kept it*, *i. e.* retained it in their *Thoughts* and *Conſideration*, and ſo *brought forth fruit with patience*, Luke viii. 12, 13, 14, 15. So that to the making of a good *Beginning* in Religion, it is not only neceſſary that we ſhould *Ponder* the Motives and Arguments of Religion, and balance them with the Difficulties of it, but that we ſhould *revolve* and *repeat* them in our Minds till we have repreſented to our ſelves with the utmoſt Life and Realty, whatſoever makes *for* and *againſt* our Entrance into the Chriſtian Warfare; and upon our having weighed them over and over in the Scales of an even and impartial Judgment, we have brought the Debate to this Reſult and Concluſion, that there is infinitely more Weight in the *Arguments* of Religion to *perſuade* us to it, than in all the *Difficulties* of it to *diſhearten* us from it. For unleſs we enter into Religion *fore-armed* with the Motives, and *forewarned* of the difficulties of it, we ſhall never be able to ſtand our Ground; but finding more *Oppoſition* than we expected, and having not a ſufficient Strength of Argument to *bear up* againſt it, we ſhall quickly *repent* of our raſh Undertaking, and be forced to *retreat* from it with Shame and Diſhonour. For this is uſually the Iſſue of thoſe *raſh* and *unſetled* Purpoſes which men make in the heats of their Paſſion; when they have

been *warmed* by some pathetick Discourse, or *startled* by some great Danger, or *chafed* into a Displeasure against their Sins by the sense of some very dolorous Accident whereinto they have been betrayed by them; in these or such like Cases, it's usual with men to make *hasty* Resolutions of Amendment, without considering either the *Matters* which they resolve upon, or the *Motives* which should support their Resolution; and so finding when they come to Practice, more Difficulty in the Matter than they were aware of, and having not sufficent Motives to carry them through it, their Resolution *flags* in the Execution, and very often *yeilds* to the next Temptation which encounters them.

Now though I do not deny but that those heats of Passion are good Opportunities to *begin* our Religion in, and if *wisely* improved, will very much contribute to our Voyage Heaven-wards, and like a brisk Gale of Wind render it much more *expedite* and *easie*; yet if in these Heats we resolve too soon, without a due Consideration of all Particulars, and of the Difficulties on the one side, and the Arguments on the other, it is hardly possible that our Resolution should ever prove a lasting Principle of Goodness. For when we resolve *inconsiderately*, we resolve to do we know not *what*, and our Resolution includes a thousand particulars that we are not aware of; most of which being repugnant to our vicious Inclinations, will when we come to practise them, be attended with such Difficulties as will easily startle our weak Resolution, which having not a sufficient Foundation of Reason to support it, will never

never be able to out-ſtand thoſe boiſterous Storms of Temptation whereunto it will be continually expoſed. If therefore we mean our Reſolution ſhould *hold out*, and commence a living Principle of Goodneſs, we muſt found it in a through *Conſideration* both of the *Duties* and *Difficulties* of Religion, and of the *Motives* which ſhould ingage us to embrace it; we muſt ſet before our Minds all the Sins we muſt *part with*, and all the Duties we muſt *ſubmit to*, and fairly repreſent to our ſelves all the Difficulties and Temptations wherewith we muſt *ingage*; and as much as in us lies render them *actual* and *preſent* to us, by ſuppoſing our ſelves *already* ingaged in our Spiritual Warfare, and ſurrounded with all the Temptations both from within and without, that we can reaſonably expect will oppoſe themſelves againſt us; and having thus placed our ſelves in the midſt of the Difficulties of Religion, we muſt never ceaſe urging our ſelves with the great Arguments and Motives of it, till we have throughly perſuaded our ſtubborn Will, and obtained of them an explicite Conſent to every Duty that calls for our Conſent and Reſolution.

III. To our good *Beginning* of the *Chriſtian Warfare* it is alſo neceſſary that we be *deeply* and *throughly* convinced of our great need of a *Mediator* to make a Propitiation for our Sins, and render us acceptable to God. For 'tis to convince us of this neceſſary Truth that the Scripture doth ſo expreſly declare, That as *there is one God*, ſo *there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus*, 1. Tim. ii. 5. that *if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt*

the righteous, and that *he is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole World*; and that *'tis for His Name sake that our sins are forgiven*, 1 John ii. 1, 2, 12. that *we have redemption through his blood*, Ephes. 1. 7. and that *without the sheding his blood there is no remission*, and that *'twas by the sacrifice of himself that Christ put away sin*, Heb. ix. 22, 26. that *we are accepted of God through his beloved Son*, Ephes. 1. 6. that *Christ is entred into Heaven now to appear in the presence of God for us*, Heb. ix. 24. and that *there He ever lives to make intercession for us*, Heb. vii. 25. that *'tis through Him that we have access unto the Father*, Ephes. ii. 18. and *by Him that we have admittance to His Grace and Favour*, Rom. v. 2. The design of all which is, throughly to convince us of this great truth, that by our Apostasie from God and Rebellion against Him we have all rendred our selves so very obnoxious to His Vengeance, that he would not pardon us upon any less *Atonement* than the precious Blood, nor admit us into favour upon any less *Motive* than the powerfull Intercession of His own Son; that by the heinousness of our Guilt we have so highly incensed the Father of Mercies against us, that no less consideration than the *Death* and *Advocation* of the greatest and dearest Person in the whole World will move Him to admit of our Repentance, and listen to our Supplications. And certainly next to exacting the punishment due to our sins at our own *hands* the most dreadful Severity he could have expressed, was to resolve not to remit it upon any other consideration than that of his own Sons undergoing it in *our stead*; by which he hath given

given us the greateſt reaſon that Heaven and Earth could afford to tremble at his Juſtice, even whilſt we are incloſed in the Arms of His Mercy.

This therefore we ought to be deeply and throughly convinced of, that our Sins have ſet us at ſuch a *diſtance* from God, that 'tis nothing but the Blood of Chriſt will *reconcile* Him to us; and that though *without* our Repentance He will never be reconciled to us, yet 'tis not for the ſake of that or any thing elſe *we* can do, that He will be induced to receive us into favour, but only for the ſake of that precious Sacrifice which His Eternal Son hath offered up for us. The firm *Perſuaſion* and *Conſideration* of which will mightily *overawe* our minds, and imprint upon them ſuch *ghaſtly* and *horrible* Apprehenſions of ſin, as will *ſcare* us from all thoughts of Compliance with it, the dreadful demonſtration which God hath given us of his Righteous ſeverity againſt it in the very Reaſon of His pardoning it, will effectually *antidote* us againſt all our ſinful Securities and Confidences: For this way of God's pardoning us upon the Sacrifice of His Son, guards His Mercy with ſuch an awful Terrour, as is ſufficient to diſhearten the moſt deſperate Sinner from preſuming upon it. For he that dares preſume to ſin on upon a mercy that coſt the blood of the Son of God, hath courage enough to *out-face* the Flames of Hell, and is not capable of any Mercy that the great God can indulge with ſafety to his own Authority. For what Mercy can be ſafe from that Man's *Abuſe* and *Preſumption*, that dares abuſe a Mercy ſo *guarded* and *ſecured* as this is,

by being founded upon such a dreadful Consideration?

And as a through Persuasion of the Necessity of *Christ's Sacrifice* to the Forgiveness of our Sins, will fill us with awful Apprehensions of the Divine Severity, and set before us a most dismal prospect of the vast demerit of our Sin, both which are necessary to ingage us to a through Reformation; so a through conviction of the Necessity of his *Intercession* to render our *Duties*, our *Prayers*, and Persons acceptable to God, will effectually *humble* and *abase* us in our own eyes, which, as I shall shew you by and by, is highly conducive to a good *Beginning* of this our *Christian Warfare*. For next to *banishing* us from his presence *for ever*, the most effectual course God could take to *abase* us, was to exclude us from all *immediate* Intercourse with him, and not to admit of any more Addresses or Supplications from us, but only through the hands of a *Mediator*; which is a plain Demonstration how infinitely *pure* he is, and how *base* and *vile* our sins have rendred us: insomuch that he will not suffer a sinful Creature to come near him otherwise than by a *Proxy*, that he will not accept of a *Service* from a guilty Hand, nor listen to a *Prayer* from a sinful Mouth, till 'tis first *hallowed* and *presented* to him by a *pure* and *holy* Mediator. So that unless we are strangely *inconsiderate*, we cannot but be touched with a deep sense of our own *Vileness*, when we think at what a *distance* the pure and holy God keeps us; how he *stands off* at the Stench of our Abominations, and notwithstanding all his Benignity towards us, will neither *hear us*, nor have any thing to *do* with

with us, without the powerful *Interceſſion* of his own Son.

And as our Conviction of the Neceſſity we have of Chriſt's *Sacrifice* and *Interceſſion* is very apt to affect us with holy *Sorrow* and *Fear*, both which are very powerful Inſtruments of our Reformation; ſo our perſuaſion of the Realty and Excellency of his *Mediation* is no leſs apt to inſpire us with a mighty *Hope* and *Aſſurance* of Acceptance with God, if we reform and amend. For it ſeems that upon *propitiatory* Sacrifices and *interceeding* Spirits, guilty Minds have been always inclined to place their confidence of Acceptance with God. Hence it was a principle generally received by Men of all Nations and Religions, (however it came to paſs I know not,) that for ſinful men to appeaſe the incenſed Divinity it was neceſſary, firſt, that ſome *Life* ſhould be *Sacrificed* to him by way of *Satisfaction* for their Sins; and that the *nobler* it was, the more *propitious* it rendred him. 1. That ſome high Favorite of his ſhould be prevaild with to *intercede* with him in their behalf. Whereupon underſtanding by univerſal Tradition that there were a ſort of *middle Beings* (whom they call *Dæmons* and we *Angels*,) between the ſovereign God and Men, they began to addreſs to *Theſe*, and to bribe them with ſacred Honours to *interpoſe* with God in their behalf. And if they could make a ſhift to rely upon *Sacrifices*, the moſt precious of which were the Lives of ſinful Men; and to depend upon *Interceſſours*, of whoſe intereſt with God they had little or no Security; what a mighty ground of Confidence and Aſſurance have *we*, for whom the Son of God

God once offered ſuch a *meritorious* Sacrifice upon Earth, and continues to make ſuch a powerful Interceſſion in Heaven? For beſides that, as he was a *ſpotleſs* and *innocent* Perſon, His Sacrifice was *wholly* meritorious for guilty offenders; and beſides that, as He was a Perſon of infinite *Value* and *Dignity*, His Sacrifice was meritorious for *a World* of guilty offenders; God, upon whoſe good Pleaſure the *Admiſſion* or *Refuſal* of it intirely depended, has openly declared His Acceptation thereof as a Propitiation for the ſins of the World, and ingaged Himſelf by a publick *Grant* and *Charter* of Mercy to indemnifie for the ſake of it every Sinner in the World that will but return to Him by a ſerious aud hearty Repentance; neither of which great things could ever be ſaid of any other Sacrifice. And in the Vertue of this *Sacrifice*, as well as of his own perſonal *Intereſt* with His Father, He now intercedes in our behalf; and pleading our Cauſe, as He doth, with the price of our Souls in his Hand, even his precious Blood by which He Redeemed them, we may be ſure that with that powerful *Oratory* He cannot fail of ſucceeding in our behalf. For having *purchaſed* for us, by His Blood, all thoſe Favours which He *interceeds* for, He is inveſted with the Right and power of *beſtowing* them upon us. So that now, for our greater Security, all thoſe Favours, which God hath *promiſed* us, are actually *depoſited* in the hands of our *Mediator*: And though His bare Promiſe is in it ſelf as great an Aſſurance as can be given us; yet it is to be conſidered that guilty Minds are naturally *anxious* and full of unreaſonable *Jealouſies*, and conſequently whilſt they

they looked upon God as their *adverſe* Party, and a party infinitely *offended* by them, would have been very prone to *ſuſpect* the worſt, had they had nothing but His bare Word to depend on. And therefore in Condeſcenſion to this pitiable Infirmity of his ſinful Creatures, he hath not only *promiſed* them his Acceptance and Favour upon Condition of their Return to him, but hath alſo put the *Performance* of his Promiſe into a *third Hand*, even into the Hand of a *Mediator*, who by the nature of his Office is *equally* concerned for both Parties; as well that God ſhould perform his *Promiſe*, if we performed our *Duty*, as that we ſhould perform our *Duty*, if we received the Benefit of his *Promiſe*. And hence, *Heb.* vii. 22. our Mediator is called the *Sponſor*, or *Surety of a better Covenant*. So that now we have no longer to do with God *immediately* as our adverſe Party; but by a *Mediator*, who by his Office is obliged to be on *our* ſide as well as *God's*, and to take care that neither receive the *others* Part of the Covenant without performing his *own*. Thus as he hath been ſometimes pleaſed in Compliance with humane Weakneſs to enforce his *Promiſe* with his *Oath*, not that the *one* is in its own Nature a greater Security from God than the *other*, but becauſe with *Men* an *Oath* is more obliging than a *Promiſe*; ſo in great Condeſcenſion to the unreaſonable *Diffidence* of our guilty Minds, he hath not only *promiſed* us pardon and Acceptance upon our Repentance, but he hath alſo given us a *collateral Security* for the performance of it, even the Security of a *Mediator*, in whoſe hands he hath *depoſited* whatſoever he hath

hath promiſed us. Not that *in it ſelf* this is a greater Security than his own bare Word and Promiſe, which he cannot *falſifie* without renouncing his Being: but becauſe this way of giving Security by a *third Perſon* is more *accommodate* to the Method of our Covenants and Agreements with one another, and conſequently more apt to ſatisfie our *anxious* and *diffident* Minds.

And thus the Conviction of our need of a *Mediator*, and the Perſuaſion of the *Reality* and *Excellency* of his Mediation, will powerfully work both on our *Hope* and *Fear*, which are the main Springs of all our religious Endeavours; and give us at once the moſt *horrible* Proſpect of the Evil of Sin, and the moſt *comfortable* Aſſurance of Pardon and Acceptance with God upon our Repentance and Amendment; both which are abſolutely neceſſary to our ſucceſsful *Entrance* into the *Chriſtian Warfare*.

IV. To our *Beginning* of this *Holy Warfare*, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould be affected with a deep *Sorrow* and *Shame* and *Remorſe* for our paſt Iniquities. For this the Apoſtle calls, *ſorrowing to repentance*, and tells us that *godly ſorrow worketh repentance to Salvation not to be repented of*, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. and accordingly it is recorded of S. *Peter*'s Converts, that the beginning of their repentance was their being *pricked at the heart*, Acts ii. 37. and even Repentance it ſelf is in Scripture called *a broken and contrite heart*, this being the moſt immediate Preparation to a true Repentance or Change of Mind, *Pſal.* li. 17. And hence the ancient Penitents are deſcribed in Scripture as *girding them-*

themſelves with ſackcloth, and repenting in duſt and aſhes; in Alluſion to the ancient manner of *great* and *ſolemn* Mournings, which was to put on *Sackcloth*, cover the Head with *Aſhes*, and ſit in the *Duſt*. And in the Primitive and Pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity it is evident that the *bittereſt* Sorrows and Remorſes were looked upon as neceſſary Preparations to Repentance, for the Penitents, in thoſe days, as *Tertullian* and *Nazianzen* deſcribe them, "Lay proſtrate at the Church Doors "in Sackcloth and Aſhes, ſupplicating the Prayers "of the Presbyters and Widows, hanging on the "Garments and Knees of thoſe that entred into "the Church, kiſſing their Foot-ſteps, and with "Rivers of Tears in their Eyes beſeeching their "Prayers to God for their Pardon. Now though we are not under the Severities of ſuch *an Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline*, yet we are equally obliged with thoſe ancient Penitents to exerciſe it *internally* in our Hearts. For Sin is as bad *now* as it was *then*, and as great an evil in *us*, as it was in *them*; and therefore ought to be lamented by us with an *equal* Sorrow and Remorſe. And indeed, if we ever mean to wage War with it with Succeſs, it is neceſſary we ſhould acquire before-hand a through *Senſe* and *Feeling* of the Evil of it; that we ſhould chaſtiſe our Souls with ſome degree of that *bitter* Sorrow and Regreet it deſerves, and inflict upon our ſelves ſome part of that Hell of infinite *Horrour* and *Anguiſh* that is ingendring in its Womb; that ſo being the more *ſenſible* of its Malignity, we may be the more *enraged* againſt it, and enter the Liſts with it with the greater *Reſolution* and *Animoſity*. For our Sorrow and Remorſe

for

for our Sins, if it be *ſerious* and *hearty*, will convert into *Hatred* and *Indignation* againſt them, and that *Hatred* will *animate* us in all our Conflicts with them, and render us more *obſtinate* againſt their Terrours and Allurements. So that when in the aftercourſe of our Warfare againſt them, we are tempted afreſh to *yeild* and *comply* with them, the Remembrance of the paſt *Shame* and *Sorrow*, *Remorſe* and *Confuſion* we have undergone for their ſakes, will render us far more *deaf* and *inexorable* than otherwiſe we ſhould be to their Solicitations.

If therefore we would ingage in this Spiritual Warfare with ſucceſs, we muſt be often *reflecting* upon our paſt Sins, and *repreſenting* them to our ſelves in all their *aggravating* Circumſtances. And when we have ſurveyed them *round about*, and conſidered them in all their natural *Turpitude*, *Diſingenuity*, and *Indecency*, and applied them to our ſelves in all their *appendant* Stings, *ſhameful* Effects, and *diſmal* Circumſtances, ſo that our hearts begin to *feel* them, and to *ſmart* and *bleed* under the dolorous Senſe of them; then muſt we pour them out before God in *ſad* and *mournful* Confeſſions. For the very *Confeſſion* of our Sins before ſo pure and great a Being, is in it ſelf an effectual Means to increaſe our ſhame and Sorrow for them; and he muſt have a very hard heart that can *ingenuouſly*, and without any *Reſerve*, lay open his crimes before the God of Heaven and Earth, in all their *black* Aggravations, without being *ſtung* with a ſenſible Regret and Confuſion; eſpecially if he frequently repeat his Confeſſions as he ought to do.

V. To

V. To our ſucceſsful *Beginning* of this our *Chriſtian Warfare*, it is alſo neceſſary that we earneſtly *implore* the divine *Aid* and *Aſſiſtance* to enable us to go through with it. For God knowing how unable we are *of our ſelves* to ingage in this great Enterprize, with that good Conduct that is neceſſary to give us any probability of Succeſs, hath promiſed us his own *Preſence* and *Aſſiſtance* even from the *Beginning* to the *End* of it; and if in any part of it his Aſſiſtance be neceſſary, 'tis doubtleſs in the *Entrance*, which, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, is by far the moſt *difficult* and *hazardous*. If therefore we preſume to *enter* upon it without *ſupplicating* God to *ſecond* us with his Grace and Aſſiſtance, we ſhall quickly find our ſelves ſhamefully *foiled* and *defeated*. For though he hath promiſed to aſſiſt us, yet 'tis upon Condition that we earneſtly *beg* and *ſeek* him; he will *give his Spirit*, but it is *to thoſe that ask it*, Luke xi. 13. he will *draw near unto us*, but firſt *we muſt draw near unto him*, James iv. 8. and we are aſſured *that we ſhall have if we ask*, *that we ſhall find if we ſeek*, *and that it ſhall be opened to us if we knock*, Mat. vii. 7. And therefore we are bid to *go boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy*, *and find grace to help us in the time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. and not only to *pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſ. v. 17. but *in every thing by prayer and ſupplication to let our requeſts be made known unto God*, Phil. iv. 6. and if in *every thing* we ought to make known our Wants to him, then much more in this *great* and *difficult* Undertaking, in which it will be impoſſible for us to ſucceed without his heavenly Aid and Aſſiſtance.

Wherefore

Wherefore, as we hope for Victory in this our *Spiritual Warfare*, we muſt earneſtly implore his *Concurrence* with us, and beſeech him to *ſecond* us in all our weak Efforts and Endeavours. We muſt lay open our woful Caſe before him, and remonſtrate to him that we are heartily *willing* to do what we *are able*, but that without him we are abundantly ſenſible all will be *in vain*. We muſt tell him that our Dependance is *upon* him, and that all our Hope of *Succeſs* is *in* him, and that we dare not ſtir one ſtep *without* him; and beſeech him that he will not *ſtand by*, and ſee us ſpend our ſelves in *ineffectual* Strugglings, but that he will graciouſly ſtretch forth his *helping* Hand to us, and not ſuffer us to miſcarry for want of his neceſſary *Aſſiſtance*. Which, if we do, we may aſſure our ſelves that the merciful God, who is the Father of our Spirits, will never *abandon* his own off-ſpring whilſt it cries out to him, and with pitiful and bemoaning Looks implores his *Aid* and gracious *Co-operation*.

Whilſt therefore we are thus endeavouring to prepare our ſelves for our *Spiritual Warfare*, we ought in every act of Preparation to *look up* to God, and earneſtly *ſupplicate* the Concurrence of his Grace and Spirit. While we are endeavouring to *believe*, we muſt beg him to help *our unbelief*, to remove all *Prejudices* from our minds, and preſent the Evidences of our Religion to our Underſtandings in a *clear* and *convincing* Light. When we are ſetting our ſelves to a ſerious *Conſideration*, we muſt beſeech him to fix our Thoughts, to *ſuggeſt* to, and *repeat* his Heavenly Motives and Arguments ſo faſt and thick upon our Minds, that no

no ſinful or worldly Thought may be able to crowd in to *diſturb* or *divert* our Meditations. When we are labouring to perſwade our ſelves of our Need, and the Reality of our Saviour's *Mediation*, we muſt earneſtly intreat him to open our Eyes, and convince us effectually of the horrible *Danger* of our ſin, and of the infallible *Efficacy* of that bleſſed Remedy. When we are attempting to *affect* our ſelves with the bitter Senſe of our paſt Tranſgreſſions, we muſt implore him to ſtrike in with us, and to inſpire our Minds with ſuch *piercing* and *powerful* Convictions of the infinite *Shame*, *Baſeneſs*, and *Danger* of them, as may ſting our *brawny* Conſciences to the quick, and diſſolve our *frozen* Souls into a ſorrowful Repentance; that ſo when we enter the Liſts and proceed to *Reſolution*, which is the *Beginning* of our ſpiritual Warfare, we may be armed againſt our Sins with ſuch a lively *Faith*, ſuch puiſſant *Conſiderations*, ſuch *Horrour* and *Animoſity* againſt them, and ſuch an aſſured *Hope* of being reſcued from the fatal Iſſues and Effects of them, as that we may be able to promiſe our ſelves a happy Succeſs in the enſuing *Courſe* of our Warfare againſt them. And having thus fitted and accoutred our ſelves for this great and momentous Enterprize;

VI. We are to enter into a ſerious and ſolemn *Reſolution* of Amendment, of forſaking and renouncing all our Sins, and never returning to them more, whatſoever Temptations may *invite*, or Difficulties *encounter* and *oppoſe* us. Which *Reſolution* is in Scripture called μετάνοια, which we tranſlate *Repentance*, but in ſtrictneſs ſignifies a *Change of Mind* or of Purpoſe and Reſolution,

a renouncing our *ſinful* Purpoſes, and ſolemnly ingaging our ſelves in a contrary Reſolution of *living ſoberly and righteouſly and godly in this preſent World.* So that whereſoever the Precept of Repentance is expreſſed by this word, the meaning of it is, to oblige us to *change* the wicked *Purpoſes* of our Hearts into a firm and ſerious *Reſolution* of forſaking all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and intirely reſigning up our ſelves to the will and diſpoſal of God. And hence it is that μεταvοεῖν and ἐπιστρέφειν, *i. e.* to *change our minds* and *convert* or *turn*, are in Scripture ſo often put together; the one denoting the *inward* Change of our Reſolution, the other the *outward* Change of our Practice purſuant to it. So *Acts* iii. 19. *repent and be converted*, and *Acts* xxvi. 20. *that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*; that is, That they ſhould reſolve to forſake their Sins, and ſubmit to their Duty, and put their Reſolution into Practice. And ſo that other word μεταμέλεια, which we alſo render *Repentance*, ſtrictly ſignifies *an after-care*, that is purſuant unto this μετάνοια, or *Change of Reſolution.*

Now this Repentance or Change of Reſolution is the *Initial* Act of the Religion of Sinners, whereby they *reſume* their inward Man from the Service of Sin, and *ſubmit* and *reſign* their Wills to God; whereby in Heart and Will they *forſake* the Devil's Colours, and liſt themſelves *Voluntiers* under the Banner of Chriſt. And being ſo, it ought to be performed with ſo much the more *Care* and *Preparation.* For the *Beginning* of all great Enterprizes is the *Ground* and *Foundation* of them; which if it be not firmly laid will be apt

to

to ſink under the *Superſtructures*, and to endanger their Ruine and Downfall. Now all the *foregoing* Duties being neceſſary Preparations to a good *Reſolution*, we ought before we *reſolve*, to ſpend a conſiderable portion of time in the diligent Practice of *them*, and not to reſolve hand over head, till we are duely and truely prepared for it, till by exerciſing our *Faith* and *Conſideration*, &c. we have *broken* and *tamed* our perverſe and obſtinate Wills, and throughly perſwaded them to *part with* every Sin, and to *approve of*, and *conſent to* every Duty that is comprehended in a through Reſolution of Amendment. And if when we are about to *reſolve*, we find upon a ſtrict Examination any ſecret *Reſerve* or *Exception* in our Wills, if there be any Luſt which they are not throughly *perſwaded* to part with, or any Duty to which they are not fully *reconciled*, we ought for that time to forbear *reſolving*, and to go on in the Exerciſe of the *preparatory* Duties, till we find our reluctant Wills throughly *conquered* and *perſwaded* by them. For if there be any *leak* left open in our Reſolution for any Sin to creep in at, *that* will be ſure to inſinuate in the next *Storm* of temptation; and if it ſhould not let in *other* Sins after it, as 'tis a thouſand to one but it will, 'twill by its own *ſingle* Weight ſink us into eternal Perdition. Wherefore before ever we enter into the *Reſolution* of Amendments, we ought to be very careful that our Wills be throughly *prepared* for it; that they be reduced to a fair *Compliance* with the matter we are reſolving upon, and effectually *diſſwaded* out of all Reſolution to the contrary; and when this is done, we may

chearfully proceed to the forming of our good *Reſolution.*

Which ought to be performed by us, between God and our ſelves, with the greateſt *Serioufneſs* and *Solemnity.* For now our *Hearts* being ready, we are to betake our ſelves to our *Knees*, and in theſe, or ſuch like words, to devote our ſelves to God, *O thou bleſſed Author of my Being, I am now fully convinced that I owe my ſelf to thee by a thouſand Ties and Obligations, and am infinitely ſorry and aſhamed that I have ſo long ſequeſtred and withdrawn my ſelf from thee to ſerve my own baſe Luſts and Affections. Wherefore now in thy dread Preſence, and in that of thy holy Angels, I here entirely reſign up my ſelf unto thee, and do reſolve, without any Reſerve or Exception, that whatſoever Temptations I may meet with for the future, I will never wilfully withdraw or alienate my ſelf from thee more. From henceforth I heartily renounce all my Sins, and particularly thoſe that have been moſt dear and pleaſant to me, and do faithfully promiſe to continue thy true and loyal Subject as long as I breath, and that whatſoever Invitations I may have to the contrary, I will never revoke the Reſolution I now make, or any part of it. So help me, O my God.*

And having thus ſolemnly *reſolved*, it will be highly neceſſary that for the farther *Ratification* of it, we ſhould yet more ſolemnly repeat it in the *holy Sacrament*; wherein, according to the Cuſtom of *Feaſts* upon *Sacrifices*, God and every faithful Communicant do *mutually* re-oblige themſelves to one another, and upon the ſacred Symbols of the Body and Blood of Jeſus, do *ratifie* to each other each others Part of that everlaſting Covenant

Covenant which by the Federal Rite of his meritorious Death and Sacrifice was inviolably *sealed* and *confirmed*. So that when we take those holy Elements into our hands, which the Priest in God's stead presents and offers to us, we do in effect make this solemn Dedication of our selves to God; *Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy and lively Sacrifice unto thee; and here we call to witness his sacred Bloud that redeemed us, and those vocal Wounds which do now intercede for us, that from henceforth we oblige our selves never to start from thy service, what Difficulties soever we may encounter in it, or what temptations soever we may have to forsake it.* And having thus resolved and confirmed our Resolution by the Body and Bloud of our Saviour, and taken the Sacrament upon it not to depart from what we have resolved, we have actually *listed* and *ingaged* our selves in a Warfare against Sin, the World, and the Devil, upon the final *Success* whereof our everlasting Fate depends. And thus you see what Duty is implied in the *Beginning* or *Entrance* of this *Warfaring* Part of the Life of a Christian.

SECT. II.

Wherein some Motives *are urged to perswade men to the Practice of those Duties that are proper to the* Beginning *of the* Christian Warfare.

Having in the former Section given a brief Account of those Duties which are necessary to the well *Beginning* of our *Christian Warfare*, I shall

now, for a close of that Argument, endeavour to *press* and *perswade* those who have not as yet *begun*, to enter immediately upon it, by putting in practice these *Initial* Duties of it, you who have been hitherto *warring* against God, and *striving* against your Duty and your Happiness, be at last perswaded to *make a Stand* for a while, and to *listen* to the voice of Reason and Religion, which do both call aloud to you to *face about*, to *desert* the Party wherein you are ingaged, and *come* over to the side of Virtue. And that I may, if possible, prevail, I do here earnestly beseech you, even by all that is *dear* and *precious* to you, by the Love of God, and by the Lives of your Souls, and by all your Hopes of Happiness in the World to come, seriously to consider with me these following *Motives.*

1. That there is a vast *Necessity* of beginning this our Spiritual Warfare *one time or other.*

2. That 'tis unspeakably most *secure* and *advantagious* for us to begin it *now.*

3. That the *final Success* of it doth very much depend upon the well *Beginning* of it.

4. That when once we have well *begun* it, the main *Difficulty* of it is conquered.

1. Consider the vast *Necessity* there is of beginning this Spiritual Warfare *one time or other.* For that which is necessary for us to accomplish *at last*, is necessary to be undertaken by us *one time or other.* Now it is as necessary for us to *oppose* and *vanquish* the Temptations of the World, and the Corruptions of our own Nature, as it is *not to go* to Hell, or *not to miss* of Heaven. For in this great Battel

Battel the everlasting Fate of our Souls is to be decided, and if we come off *Victors*, we are *made*, if *vanquished*, we are *undone* to Eternity. So that in this Spiritual Warfare we do not contend like the Warriors of this World, for a Triumphal Wreath that will *wither* upon our Brows, or for Fame and Renown which is nothing but the *Breath* of a company of talking *People*, or for the enlarging of our Empire over the next *handful* of a *Turf*; but we are contending with Enemies that are pursuing us to *Hell*, and binding us in Chains of *everlasting Darkness*. We are to fight for our *Immortality*, for all our hopes of Happiness and Well-being in a *never-ending* Life; and when so much depends upon the Success of our Conflict, and we must *conquer* and be *crowned*, or *die*; *win* the Field, and Heaven, or yield our selves *Captives* to eternal Misery, I leave you to judge whether we are not obliged under the vastest *Necessity* one time or other to *begin*. And if we must begin *one time or other*, why not *now* as well as *hereafter*? And to what purpose should we *defer* entring upon that Work, which we all confess we must *at last* not only *begin*, but *accomplish*? For to have *accomplished* a necessary Work, especially when it is *difficult* and *important*, is a great *Satisfaction* to the Mind; and whereas while it is yet to *do*, the prospect of the *pain* and *labour* of it creates in us a great deal of *Trouble* and *Anxiety*; when once it is *done*, or the main Difficulty of it is *over*, every Reflection on our past pains, *sweetens* our present Repose, and *crowns* it with Joy and Triumph. And thus it is in our *Entrance* into the *Christian Life*, which we all confess to be both *necessary* and

difficult; and it being so, what do we else by our *delaying* it, but only *prolong* the pain and trouble of it? And whereas by one *brave* Attempt we might *ease* our selves, and set our Souls at *Rest* for ever; we *languish* away our life in Misery, and are *sick* with the Fear of our *Remedy*. Just like poor Men that are under the torment of the *Stone*, they know they must be *cut* or *die*, but out of a frightful Apprehension of their Remedy, they put it off *from time to time*; they promise they will endure it rather than lose their Lives, but when they come to the Trial, their Hearts fail, and they must needs have a little longer Respite; but *all the while* they endure not only the *pain* of their *Disease*, but also the *apprehensions* of their *Cure*, which *at last* they must also actually *endure*, or *Death*, which is much more terrible to them. Whereas, had they been cut *at first*, they might have saved themselves all that Torment, and Fear of *farther* Torment, which they endured in the time of their *Delay*. And just thus it is with those who *defer* their *Repentance*, which had they begun *at first* when they fell into their sinful Courses, their Hearts might have been at Ease a *great while* ago, and they might have saved themselves all those *Gripes* and *Twinges* of Conscience, and all those *painful* Apprehensions of the smart and Difficulty of repenting *at last*, which they have been forced to endure in the several periods of their Delay. But alas, Repentance is a *sad* Remedy! Well, be it never so *sad*, you know you must endure it, or that which is a thousand times *worse*. Why then, you will endure it, that you are resolved upon, but fain you would have a little *longer* Respit:

Ah

Ah fooliſh Souls! why will you *prolong* your Miſery, and *linger* out your Lives in Torment, when as by enduring *now* what you muſt endure *at laſt*, you might be preſently at Eaſe, not only from the *Pain* of your *paſt* Guilt, but from the *Fear* of your *future* Repentance.

II. Conſider that 'tis unſpeakably more *ſecure* and *advantagious* for us to begin our Chriſtian Warfare *now*. For *this* Life is the only time of our Trial and Probation, the Field in which our ſpiritual Warfare is to be fought, and from which we muſt all go off triumphing *Conquerors*, or eternal *Slaves*. And alas ſuch a *ſlippery* and *uncertain* thing is this our preſent Exiſtence, that there is no one part of it we can call *our own*, but what is preſent. For all our *Futurity* is in God's Hand and Diſpoſal, and how he will *ſhorten* or *prolong* it we are not able to prognoſticate. So that for ought we know the next moment may finally determine our everlaſting Fate, and the Hopes of Eternity which are now in our hands may ſlip through our Fingers before to morrow morning, and leave us deſperate for ever. What a dreadful Venture therefore do theſe men run, that *delay* from time to time the *ſecuring* their Salvation by a timely Repentance? When 'tis *now* in their own Power, would they but lay hold on the *preſent* Opportunity, to ſecure their Victory and Crown, they rather chuſe to go to *croſs or pile* for them, and to ſtake them upon a Contingency that is not in their Power to diſpoſe of.

But ſuppoſe they could ſecure that *hereafter* to themſelves to which they do ſo venturouſly defer

their

their Repentance, yet still there is another Venture of which they can *never* be secure, and that is, whether when that *hereafter* comes, God will not out of a just Resentment of their present Despite to, and contempt of his Grace, *withdraw* it from them. Which if he should, they would be left in as great an incapacity of repenting, as if he had withdrawn their *Lives* from them; it being as possible for us to repent without *Life* when we are *dead*, as without God's *Grace* whilst we are *living*. So that promising that we will repent hereafter, we promise not only for *our selves*, but for *God* too; we promise that *He* shall wait *our* leisure, and dance Attendance after us through all the tedious Stages of our Delays and Procrastinations; that he shall tamely put up all those Affronts and Provocations which between *this* and our *hereafter* we are resolved to offer him, and in the end be as much at our beck, and as ready to come into our Assistance, when we shall think fit to call for him, as if we had never given him the least Offence or Provocation to the contrary. For unless we can secure our selves of this, it will be every whit as uncertain whether we *repent* hereafter if we *live*, as whether we *live* to hereafter to *repent*. And what a madness is it for men that have now their Lives and Souls in their own hands, to stake and venture them upon two such contingent Issues, that are both of them so far out of their Power and Disposal?

But suppose there were no hazard in either of these, that we were as secure both of our own *Lives* and God's *Grace*, as we are of the present Moment, yet we can never hope to begin our Christian

Chriſtian Warfare ſo *advantagiouſly* as *now*. For all the time we are deferring it, our Enemies are gathering Strength, and muſtering up their Forces againſt us; our bad Inclinations are *ripening* and *improving*, and our evil Habits are growing more *inveterate*; and ſo many Degrees of Strength as *theſe* get, *we* loſe; and ſo proportionably as their power to *offend* us increaſes, ours to *defend* our ſelves againſt them decreaſes. What a madneſs therefore is it for men, who pretend to be reſolved to ingage in the Chriſtian Warfare, to *defer* it, as they do, from time to time, when they cannot but be ſenſible, if they take any notice of themſelves, how much every further delay *improves* their *Luſts*, and *impairs* their *Reaſon*, how it *fortifies* their Enemy, and *weakens* themſelves. You ſay you are convinced of the *Neceſſity* of this Warfare, and *reſolved* to undertake it *one time or other*, though *as yet* you cannot prevail with your ſelves to enter upon it. And why not yet; why, for ſome reaſon or other forſooth you find your ſelves averſe to it; and do you imagine that if you are averſe to it *to day*, you will be leſs averſe to it *to morrow* or *next* day? No, fond Men, do not abuſe your ſelves, for if you will not enter upon it *now*, be aſſured of this, you will never find your ſelves either ſo *willing* to it, or ſo *fit* and *able* for it again as long as you live. For your Luſts will grow every day dearer and dearer to you, and ſo *twine* and *wrap* themſelves by degrees about your Hearts and Affections, that you will every day find your ſelves more and more unwilling to part with them; and at laſt they wil *cling* ſo faſt, that there will be no pulling them from ye with-

without pulling away your Souls with them. Wherefore talk no more, I beseech you, of repenting *hereafter*, but resolve once for all, that you will repent *now or never*.

III. Consider the *final Success* of this your spiritual Warfare doth very much depend upon your *well-beginning* of it. By what hath been said you plainly see, there is an absolute Necessity of beginning it *one time or other*, and that you can never begin it so *securely* and *advantagiously* as *now*; but unless you begin it *well* now, that is, with a through Preparation of Heart, you were e'en as good sit still and not begin *at all*. For when once you come to the Trial, to encounter the Oppositions of a corrupt Nature, and contend with the Difficulties of a holy Life, you will then quickly find your sappy Resolutions sink, and like so many rotten Banks yield and give way at every Spring-tide of Temptation. But as the well laying the *Foundations* of a House secures the *Superstructures* against the Violences of all future Storms and foul Weather, so the first setling of your Resolution upon a *firm* and *stedfast* Basis, will be a mighty Safeguard to it against all ensuing Storms of Temptation. That well-grounded *Faith* and through *Consideration* which induced us to it, will go along with it, and guard it through the Enemie's Quarters with such invincible Reasons, as no sinful Motive will be able to disprove or cope with. That hearty *Shame* and bitter *Sorrow* and *Regret* which we felt in the forming our Resolution, will animate and render it more firm and inexorable against all the Solicitations of sin for the future. Those fervent and earnest *Prayers* which

which preceded and accompanied it, will not only ingage *us* to take the more *care* and *regard* of it, but ingage *God* alſo to contribute more *aid* and *aſſiſtance* to it in all its enſuing Conflicts and Encounters. And when in the framing of our Reſolution we have taken effectual care before-hand not to reſolve *upon* any thing but what we have conſidered the *difficulty* of, or *againſt* any thing but what we have felt the *ſhame* and *ſmart* of, or upon any *Reaſon*, but what we have throughly *pondered*, and do firmly *believe*, and together with all this, have engaged by our earneſt *Prayers* the God of all Grace to aid and aſſiſt us, we may with ſome aſſurance promiſe our ſelves a bleſſed *Iſſue* and Succeſs. For now we are *forewarned* of, and *forearmed* againſt all that can happen to us in our ſpiritual Warfare; now there is no difficulty can ariſe in our way which we did not *foreſee* and *provide againſt* when we firſt ſet forward to Heaven. So that if from henceforth we do but take an honeſt care to watch the Motions of our Enemy, and to keep up our own Hearts and Courage, we cannot miſs of a glorious *Victory*, and after that an everlaſting *Triumph*.

But if we make a *raſh* Beginning, and reſolve *precipitantly*, without obſerving the above-named Rules and Directions, in all probability our *haſty* Purpoſes will end in a *leiſurely* Repentance. So that unleſs we intend to take a great deal of pains in Religion to no purpoſe, to weave a *Penelope's* Web, and *do* and *undo* as long as we live, and only to dance round in an eternal Circle of *ſinning* and *reſolving againſt* it, *reſolving* and *ſinning* again, without ever making a ſtep *forward*, but ſtill

wheeling

wheeling about to the ſame Point; let us now at laſt reſolve to *begin* in that *prudent* Method which God hath preſcribed us.

IV. Conſider that when once we have *begun* it *well*, we have conquered the *main* Difficulty of this our ſpiritual Warfare. For though it be an eaſie matter to begin *ill*, to reſolve againſt our ſins in a *ſudden* Pet, or *tranſient* Heat of Paſſion; yet it muſt be confeſſed that to reſolve *well*, and *wiſely*, that is, with that firm *Belief* and through *Conſideration* of things, with that *Shame* and *Sorrow*, and thoſe earneſt *Cries* to Heaven for Aid and Aſſiſtance, which are neceſſary to the founding of a *ſtrong* and *laſting* Reſolution, is not ſo eaſie a matter. For in all thoſe preparatory Exerciſes, we have a *roving* Mind, a *hard* Heart, and a *perverſe* Nature to contend with; and we ſhall find it a very hard matter to call in our *wandring* Thoughts, and unite them together into a *fixt* and *ſteady* Conſideration of the Evidences of the Truth of Religion, and of the Duties and Motives and Difficulties of it. And whilſt we are entertaining them with this *unwonted* Argument, there are a thouſand Objects with which they are better *acquainted* that will be calling them away; ſo that without a great deal of Violence to our ſelves we ſhall never be able to keep them *together* ſo long, as is neceſſary to the forming a firm *Aſſent* to the *Truth*, and the paſſing a true and impartial *Judgment* upon the *Propoſals* of Religion. And when we have fixt our Thoughts into a ſerious Conſideration of the *Evidences* of Religion, we ſhall find that our *Luſts* will object much more againſt them than our *Reaſon*; that

they

they will be casting *mists* before our Eyes and *bribing* and *biassing* our Understanding the other way, and that thereupon 'twill be more difficult than we are aware to convince our selves throughly of the truth of a Religion that is so diametrically opposite to our vicious Inclinations. But when this is done and we proceed to consider the *Duties* of Religion, and to balance the Motives with the Difficulties of them, in order to the obtaining of our selves a *full* and *free* consent to them; here again we shall find our selves at a mighty Plunge. For though the Motives to our Duty are at first View infinitely *greater* and more *considerable* than the difficulties of it; though it be unspeakably more *intolerable* to lose the Joys of Heaven, and incurr the Pains of Hell, than to endure the *sharpest* brunts of this Spiritual Warfare; yet *these* being *present* and *sensible*, have a more immediate access to us, and consequently are apter to move us than either of those Motives which are both of them *future* and *invisible*. So that unless we do earnestly *press* and *urge* our selves with *those* Motives, and imprint them upon our Minds in the most *lively* and *real* Characters, we shall find our selves overruled in despight of them by *these* present and sensible Difficulties that are before us. But when we have *effectually* convinced our selves that those difficulties of our Duty are much less considerable than the Motives to them, we shall find it a hard Task to perswade our Wills into a *free* and *explicit* Consent to all the *Particulars* of it. For now we shall find a strong *Aversation* in our Natures to *sundry* of those Duties that call for our *Approbation*, and there will be a mighty Counter-

striving

ſtriving between our *Reaſon* and *Inclinations*. Our darling Luſts, thoſe boſom Orators within us, will now employ all their Rhetorick to diſſwade us from parting with them; they will *claſp* about our Souls, like *departing* Lovers, and uſe all their *Charms* and *Allurements* to hold us faſt, and reconcile themſelves to us; and under theſe Circumſtances, though we have all the reaſon in the World on our ſide, we ſhall find it will be no ſuch eaſie matter effectually to diſpoſe our Wills to *cloſe* with ſo many *offenſive* Duties, and *part* with ſo many *beloved* Sins. But when *this* is done, which to be ſure will coſt us many a violent *Struggle* and *Contention* with our ſelves, there are *other* Difficulties to be maſtered. For now we muſt *reflect* upon our paſt ill Life, and expoſe it to our own Eyes in all its natural *Horrour*, *Turpitude*, and *Infamy*, and never leave *reproaching* our ſelves with the *Foulneſs* and *Diſingenuity*, the *Madneſs* and *Folly* of it, till we find our hearts affected with *Shame* and *Sorrow* for, and *Indignation* againſt it. And for us that have been ſo long uſed to *cokes* and *flatter* our ſelves, to *paint* and *varniſh* our Deformities, and crown our Brows with *forced* and *undeſerved* Applauſes; for *us* to *condemn* and *upbraid* our ſelves, to ſtrip our Actions of all their *artificial* Beauty, and ſet our ſelves before our own Eyes in all our *naked*, *undiſguiſed* Uglineſs, and not look off till we have lookt our ſelves into *Shame* and *Horrour* and *Hatred* of our ſelves, will be, at firſt eſpecially, a very *ungrateful* Employment; and yet it may be a good while perhaps before our *hard* and *unmalleable* Hearts will yield to the impreſſions of *Godly Sorrow* and *Remorſe*. But when this

this Difficulty is conquered, our work is not yet *totally* finiſhed. For now we muſt *come off* from our ſelves and all our *preſumptuous* Dependences upon our own Ability and Power, and in a deep ſenſe of our own moſt wretched *Weakneſs* and *Impotency* throw our ſelves wholly upon God, and with *earneſt* and *importunate* Out-cries implore his gracious Aid and Aſſiſtance. And, let me tell ye, to men that have been all along inured to ſuch glorious Conceits of themſelves, ſuch mighty Confidences in their own Abilities; that have promiſed themſelves from time to time that at *ſuch* and *ſuch* a time they would repent and amend, as if, without God's Help, 'twere in *their* Power to repent when they *pleaſed*; for ſuch men as theſe, I ſay, to come out of themſelves and their own *ſelf-confidences*, and wholly caſt themſelves upon a foreign Help; ſo ſenſibly to *feel*, and ingenuouſly to *own* their own Inability, as to fly to God, and confeſs themſelves *loſt* and *undone* without him, is as much harder matter than we can well imagine till we come to make the Experiment. And yet this, all *this*, muſt be done before we can be well prepared to *reſolve* upon the *Chriſtian Warfare*.

This I have the longer inſiſted on, becauſe I would deal *plainly* with you, and ſhew you the *worſt* of things. For whether you are told of it or no, you will find it, if ever you make the Experiment, that all your good *Reſolutions*, without theſe *Preparations*, will ſoon unravel in the *Execution*; and that after you have reſolv'd a thouſand times over you will be juſt where you are, and not one ſtep farther in Religion. But for your Encou-

ragement, know, that when with *theſe* neceſſary Preparations you have *ſolemnized* your Reſolution, you have won the *main* and *toughest* Victory in all your ſpiritual Warfare; a Victory by which you have *pulled down* your Sin from its Throne, and *broken* and *diſarrayed* its Power and Forces; ſo that now you are upon the purſuit of a *flying* Enemy, and if you do but diligently *follow* your Blow, and *purſue* your brave Reſolution through all Temptations to the contrary, and do not ſuffer your vanquiſhed Enemy to *rally* and *reinforce* himſelf againſt ye, you will ſenſibly perceive his Strength decay; and thoſe *Luſts* which ſeemed at firſt *invinſible*, will languiſh away by degrees from *weak* to *weaker*, till at laſt they expire into the Habits of their Contrary Vertues; and ſo proportionably thoſe Vertues, which through our vicious Averſations to them, ſeemed at firſt *impoſſible*, will grow on by degrees, from *poſſible* to *eaſie*, and from *eaſie* to *neceſſary*; and then the *Sins* will be more impoſſible to us than the *Vertues*.

Now what a mighty Encouragement is this to make a *good Beginning* of the Chriſtian Warfare, that in ſo doing we are ſure to conquer the *main* Difficulty of it; that when we have broke through all thoſe Oppoſitions that lie in the way to a wiſe and good Reſolution, we are paſt the *Frontiers* of Religion, and having gotten over thoſe ſteep *Alps*, at its Entrance, ſhall be ſure to find the Religion round about a plain and eaſie *Champain*, in which the further we go, the *ſmoother* 'twill be, and ſo ſmoother and ſmoother till at laſt 'twill be all *ſweet* and *delightful*, like the flowry Walks of Paradiſe.

Paradise. Let us therefore be perswaded without any farther delay, to enter *immediately* upon this our Holy Warfare, and by *Faith* and *Consideration*, &c. to lay the Foundation of a Religious Resolution; That so when we are *actually* ingaged against our spiritual Enemies we may be able to *stand our ground*, against all Temptations, and that having finally *conquered* and *subdued* them we may receive that Immortal Crown which God the Righteous Judge hath laid up for the *victorious*.

And so I have done with the *First* Part of our *Christian Warfare*, viz. our *Entrance* into it.

SECT. III.

Concerning the Second *Part of the* Christian Warfare; *with a particular Account of the Duties thereunto appertaining.*

I shall now proceed to the *Second* Part of our *Christian Warfare*, viz. The *Course* and *Progress* of it, which consists in *holy living*. For when once we have reduced our Wills to a *firm* and *well-grounded* Resolution of *entring* into this militant State, That which is next incumbent upon us, is to *pursue* our Resolution in the future Course of our Lives and Actions, that is, to *abstain* from all Sin, and endeavour to *mortifie* our Inclination to it, and to *practise* all the contrary Graces and Virtues, and endeavour to *improve* them to farther and farther degrees of perfection; or, as the Scripture expresses it, to *cease to do evil*, and to

learn to do well; to *ſtrive* againſt Sin, and to *die* to it, and to *grow in grace* and *perfect holineſs in the fear of God*. In this conſiſts the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our *Chriſtian Warfare*. In order whereunto it's indiſpenſably neceſſary that we ſhould ſtill *repeat* the Practice of thoſe Duties by which we were firſt *prepared* to enter into it: all thoſe means by which our good Reſolution was *produced*, being naturally conducive to *maintain* and *ſupport* it. And therefore we find that *Faith* and *Conſideration*, &c. are not enjoined as *temporary* Duties, that are only to be practiſed in the *Beginning* of our Warfare, but as means that will be *always* neceſſary for us throughout our whole *Progreſs* to Heaven. For ſo we are commanded not only to *acquire* a ſincere Faith or Belief of the Goſpel, but to *continue* and *be eſtabliſhed in it*, *Col.* i. 2, 3. compared with Chap. ii. 7. And ſo again we are enjoyned not only to *admit* the Propoſals of Religion into our Conſideration, but to *keep them* there, *Luke* viii. 15. and ſuffer them *to dwell richly in us*, Col. iii. 16. And ſo for all thoſe other preparatory Duties. For that from a hearty Conviction of our need of Chriſt, we ſhould beg all Mercies of God in his *Name*, and for his *ſake*, is a ſtanding Precept of Chriſtian Devotion, *John* xvi. 24. and ſo is alſo *Confeſſion* of our ſins to God, 1 *John* i. 9. and *Prayer* for his Grace and Aſſiſtance, *Col.* iv. 2. Nor is it only required that we ſhould *once* repent or change our bad Reſolution for a good one, but that we ſhould alſo *repeat* and *confirm* our good Reſolution; that we ſhould *ſtabliſh our hearts*, that is, keep our Wills *fixed* and *determined* to all good Intentions and

and Purpoſes, *James* v. 8. and *ſtand faſt in the Lord*, that is, adhere to the Profeſſion and Practice of Chriſtianity with a *firm* and *conſtant* Reſolution, *Phil.* iv. 1. For to *proceed* in our Chriſtian Warfare, is *conſtantly* to live up to our good Reſolution, which will require a continued Application of thoſe means by which we were firſt *prepared* and *diſpoſed* to enter into it. Thus Faith is no leſs neceſſary to inable us to *perform*, than it was to prepare us to *make* our good Reſolution; and ſtill the more we *believe* our Religion, the more we ſhall think our ſelves concerned in its Propoſals, and conſequently the more firmly we ſhall be reſolved to *cloſe with*, and *embrace* them; and ſo ſtill as our Faith *improves* in degrees of Certainty, our Reſolution will proportionably *grow* ſtronger and ſtronger. Again, if it were neceſſary to the *Birth* of our Reſolution, that we ſhould firſt duly *weigh* and *conſider* the Motives and the Difficulties of the Duties we were reſolving on, then it will be no leſs neceſſary to the *Growth* and *Improvement* of it, that we ſhould frequently conſider over theſe Motives and Difficulties *again*, and balance them one againſt another. And at firſt eſpecially, while our good Reſolution is yet in its *Infancy*, it will be very neceſſary that we ſhould every day before we go abroad into the World ſpend ſome portion of Time in *fore-thinking* of the many Temptations that do lie in wait for us, whether in our *Buſineſs* or *Company*, or neceſſary *Refreſhments* and *Diverſions*; and *fore-arming* our ſelves againſt them with the Motives and Arguments of our Religion; that ſo we may have our Weapons ready when ever they ſhall aſſault us, and be

always provided to reſiſt them. Again if it were neceſſary to the *forming* our Reſolution, that we ſhould be *convinced* of the Neceſſity and Reality of our Saviour's *Mediation*, then it will be no leſs neceſſary to the *performance* of it, that our Hope and Fear, which are the Springs of our Action, ſhould ſtill be excited by the *glorious* Aſſurance of Mercy and *horrid* Proſpect of Sin which this *Conviction* implies. Once more, was it neceſſary to the *well-making* of our Reſolution, that we ſhould affect our ſelves before-hand with a hearty *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our paſt Tranſgreſſions, then will it be no leſs neceſſary for the *ſtrengthening* and *confirming* it, that we ſhould ever and anon *revive* this our Shame or Grief, by reflecting on the Filthineſs of our *paſt* State, and the Weakneſs and Imperfection of our *preſent*, and by an ingenuous *Confeſſion* of both to the high and holy God; that ſo our *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our Sins being digeſted into *Anger* and *Diſpleaſure*, may *ſharpen* our Reſolution, and *animate* it more and more againſt them. In ſhort, if it be neceſſary to the *founding* of our Reſolution, that we ſhould firſt earneſtly *implore* the Divine Grace and Aſſiſtance, then it will be no leſs neceſſary for the *continuance* of it, that for the ſame purpoſe we ſhould continually apply our ſelves to the Throne of Grace; that we ſhould every Morning commit our ſelves to God's Grace and Protection, and never preſume to venture among the Snares of the World without him; that we ſhould count it as unſafe for us to go out of our Chambers without being armed with God's Aid, as 'tis to ruſh *naked* into a Battel amongſt Swords and Spears: In a word, that we ſhould

ſhould every Morning and Evening *at leaſt*, recommend our ſelves to God, and beſeech him to defend us againſt all thoſe *Terrours* and *Allurements* which either the *Devil* or our own *Luſts* ſhall propoſe to withdraw us from our good Reſolution. And if upon all theſe preparatory Exerciſes of our *Faith*, *Conſideration*, &c. it was at firſt neceſſary for us to enter into a ſolemn *Reſolution*, it will be no leſs neceſſary that with the ſame continued Preparations we ſhould frequently *iterate* and *renew* it, eſpecially *at firſt*, till the Strength of our bad Inclinations is in ſome meaſure *broken* and *abated*. Now we ſhould take to go every day out of our Chambers, *freſh* armed, as men that expect an Enemy at the Threſhold; and not to truſt our *weak* Souls among the Temptations of the World till we have firſt *chained* up our Inclinations with *new* Vows of fidelity. So that you ſee the Duties of our *Entrance* into the Chriſtian Warfare are not ſo *peculiar* to that State, but that they are alſo to be practiſed in the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of it.

But then beſides *theſe*, there are ſundry *others* that are neceſſary to our ſucceſsful *Progreſs* therein. All which I ſhall reduce to theſe following Heads:

1. That we take care to arm our ſelves with *Patience* and *Courage* to undergo and encounter the *Trouble* and *Difficulty* of it.

2. That we *propoſe* to our ſelves the moſt excellent *Examples*.

3. That we apply our ſelves to our *Spiritual Guides* for Direction.

4. That we be very curious of our *Aims* and *Intentions.*

5. That we should possess our minds with a *lively* Sense and *awful* Apprehension of God's *Presence* with, and *Inspection* over us.

6. That we frequently *examine* and *review* our own Actions.

7. That we be very *watchful* and *circumspect* in the *Conduct* and *Management* of our selves.

8. That we should betake our selves to some *honest Calling*, and behave our selves *diligently* and *industriously* therein.

9. That we should endeavour after a *chearful* Frame of Spirit.

10. That we should maintain in our minds a constant *Sense* and *Expectation* of *Heaven.*

11. That we should live in the constant use of the *external Ordinances* and *Institutions* of our Religion.

I. To the *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare, it is necessary that we arm our selves with *Patience* and *Courage* to undergo and encounter the *Troubles* and *Difficulties* of it. For so we are commanded to *be strong in the Lord*, Ephes. vi. 10. and *to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. that is, To *fortifie* our selves with the Grace of God and the Motives of Religion against all those *Hardships* and *Oppositions* which may rise up against us in our March to Heaven; for we are assured before-hand, that *we have need of patience that after we have done the will of God we may receive the Promise*, Heb. x. 36. and therefore we are bid to *strengthen our selves with all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*, Col. i. 11.

and

and *to run with patience the race that is set before us*, Heb. xii. 1.

For though it is certain that when we have well and wisely *resolved*, the *greatest* Difficulty of our Spiritual Warfare is over, yet it cannot be dissembled, that even when this is *performed*, and we proceed from hence to *Execution*, there will, *at first* especially, arise such Difficulties and Oppositions in our way as will sufficiently try our *Courage* and *Patience*. And though if when we were forming our Resolution we considered the whole matter, we could not but *foresee* great Difficulties in the Execution of it, and be very sensible what strong Inclinations from *within* and Temptations from *without* we were to *struggle* and *contend* with; yet alas the Difficulties of all Undertakings are usually much less in our *Foresight*, than in our *Sense* and *Experience* of them. For while they are in our Foresight we have only the *Notions* and *Ideas* of them to encounter, and these being not so stubborn as *the things themselves*, are much more easily conquered by us. So that when instead of our own *easie* and *compliant* Notions we come to contend with the Difficulties *themselves*, we very often find the Face of things quite *changed*, and those Difficulties which did so easily *submit* to our *Apprehensions*, do many times make an obstinate *Resistance* to our *Endeavours*. And thus many times it is in the matter in hand. So that when we are *fore-casting* the Difficulties of Religion in our Minds, we must always allow for the *Distance* of them which usually *lessens* their Appearance, and conclude with our selves that when we are *actually* ingaged with them, we *find* them much

much more *ſtiff* and *incompliant* to our *Endeavours* than they are now to our *Thoughts*; and accordingly *prepare* and *arm* our ſelves againſt them. For when from *conſidering* we proceed to *encounter* them, we muſt expect to find that to *diſcourſe* and *execute* are things of a widely different nature; and that thoſe Difficulties which we ſo eaſily *vanquiſhed* in our Thoughts and Diſcourſes, will when we are actually *contending* with them, put us to a much harder Trial of our *Valour* and *Conſtancy* than we were aware of.

For if we ſhould have nothing but our own bad Inclinations and the ordinary Temptations of the World to ſtruggle with, yet even *theſe* we ſhall find ſufficient to exerciſe our outmoſt *Patience* and *Conſtancy*. For we muſt not expect that our bad Inclinations, eſpecially after they have been *pampered* and *improved* by a long and frequent Repetition of *forbidden* Enjoyments, will be preſently *ſubdued* and *mortified*, when there are ſo many Temptations all around us continually *exciting* and *provoking* them. No, you may be aſſured they will *ſtruggle* for their lives before they give up the Ghoſt, and if they are deeply radicated, will not be torn from their Roots without a great deal of *Time* and *Labour*. So that unleſs you have a *great* ſtock of Patience and Courage to *endure* and *outſtand* their tedious Reſiſtances to your pious Endeavours, and to deny them thoſe vicious ſatisfactions which they *feed* and *live* upon, till you have *ſtarved* them out; you will quickly be *weary* of contending with them, and rather chuſe to yield them their *Deſires*, than be plagued with their reſtleſs *Importunities*.

But

But then beſides theſe *ordinary* Difficulties of denying your ſinful Deſires and Inclinations, it may be your Lot to *take up the Croſs* too, and to follow your Saviour through a dark Lane of *Sufferings* and *Perſecutions*; and then you will need a *world* of Patience and Courage to undergo all that *Shame* and *Reproach*, *Loſs* and *Pain*, *Fear* and *Suffering*, through which you muſt fight your way to Heaven if ever you come there. Since therefore this *may* happen to ye, and is not altogether *unlikely*, it concerns ye, as ye hope for Heaven, to *fore-arm* and *prepare* your ſelves againſt it. So that our Chriſtian Warfare expoſing us, as it doth, to ſo many *certain* and *probable* Difficulties, it is not without reaſon that the Apoſtle exhorts us to be *ſtedfaſt and immoveable*, *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, *foraſmuch as we know that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

II. To the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare it is neceſſary that we *propoſe* to our ſelves the moſt excellent *Examples*. For experience tells us, that good *Example* hath a ſtronger Influence upon men than good *Precepts* or *Counſels*; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe he that only gives others good Advice or Inſtructions, doth not give them that Security that he believes *himſelf*, as he that *ſeconds* his Counſel with his own Example. For they who are inſtructed do, in a great meaſure, depend upon the Judgment and Authority of their Teachers, and therefore muſt have a reaſonable *Security* that their Teachers do believe *themſelves* before they will be induced to *believe* and *comply* with what they are taught; and ſuch a Security

is

is not to be fetcht so much from their *Words* as from their Actions. But when by their Examples they *transcribe* their own Doctrines, it is visible they are *in earnest*, and that is a probable Argument to their Disciples that their Doctrine is *true*. So that good Example teaches with greater *Force* and *Authority* than good Doctrine can do, because it more *sensibly* confirms what it teaches, and doth at the same time *direct* us *what* to do, and by a very popular Argument *prove* that we *ought* to do it. Besides, when the matter which the Teacher advises or enjoyns is *hard* and *difficult*, he ought for the Encouragement of those whom he teaches, to give them a full Assurance that 'tis *practicable*; which no Argument will so *effectually* do as his own Example. For when they see that he himself *practises* what he *teaches*, that is an *ocular* Demonstration to them that 'tis *practicable*. So that good Example carries in it this strong Encouragement to Goodness, that there is nothing in it but what is *possible*, and that the greatest Difficulties that attend it are such as may be *conquered* by Diligence and sincere Endeavour. And as it gives us the most *sensible* Direction and Encouragement to Virtue, so it also represents it to us to the greatest *Advantage*. And whereas Precepts and Discourses of Virtue are only the *Pictures* and *Artificial* Descriptions of it, a virtuous Example is Virtue *animated* and exposed to our view in all its *living* Charms and Attractions. And therefore by how much Nature *exceeds* Art, and the most accomplished Beauties *excel* their Statues and Pictures, by so much is Virtue in Examples more *amiable* and *attractive* than in Precepts and Discourses.

courses. Since therefore in good Examples we see Vertue *alive* and *in Motion*, exerting it self in the most *comely* Actions and *grateful* Gestures, this must much more effectually *recommend* and *indear* it to our Minds and Affections than the most *pressing* Discourses or *lively* Descriptions of it.

This therefore is one of those great means of holy Living which the Gospel hath prescribed us, *viz.* That we should propose to our selves the best and most excellent Examples; That *we should be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the Promises*, Heb. vi. 12. and that we should be *Followers* of the Apostles, and Leaders of the Flock of Christ, as *they were of Christ himself*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. But because the Examples of the *best* of Men have a great many imperfections in them, and are very often intermixt either with *Excesses* or *Defects*, and tainted with *Superstition* or *Enthusiasm*, by reason whereof they frequently mislead those that tread too close upon the heels of them; therefore we are more particularly directed to the Example of the great Master of our Religion; which, though it consists of an *unspotted* Innocence and *perfect* Vertue, yet is every way *accommodated* to the State and Condition of humane Nature and Conversation. For he conversed among Men with a *modest* Vertue, and such as was every way consistent with an *ordinary* Course of life. His Piety was *even*, and *constant*, and *unblameable*, but such as fairly *complied* with *civil* Society and a *secular* Conversation. It affected not high *Transports*, and *Raptures* of Devotion, but was such as was both *fit* and *easie* for Mortals

to

to imitate. His Vertue consisted not in *prodigious* Fastings, or *sowre* and *unpracticable* Abstractions from Sense, but in a life of *Justice* and *Temperance*, of *Humility* and *Charity* and *Patience*, and the like; that is, in such a life as is not only *proper* but *possible* for us to transcribe. So that in his glorious Example he hath transmitted to us an *imitable* Virtue; for he took care not to *out-run* the Capacities of Men in inimitable Expressions of Sanctity and Vertue, but so far as he could *innocently*, *complied* with our Weakness, and *kept pace* with our Strength; that so he might entertain us all along with the Comforts of his *Company*, and the Influence of a perpetual *Guide*. And as that Rule of Faith which he hath propounded to us, is fitted to our Understandings, being very *short*, *easie*, and *intelligible*; so, as an excellent Writer of our own hath observed, that Copy of Manners which he hath set before us, is not only fitted with Excellencies *worthy*, but also with Compliances *possible* to be imitated by us.

And as his Example is all *imitable*, so it is all throughout *substantially* good. For it consisted in a *modest* Piety, a *simple* and *unaffected* Goodness. His Devotions to God never affected the *Stage*, nor did they ever evaporate in *Enthusiastick* Rants, or *unaccountable* Raptures of Passion, but were always *secret* and *serious*, *calm* and *manly*, animated with a *seraphick* Fervour, and yet conducted with *Reason* and *Sobriety*. His Government of himself was *exact* and *regular*, his Affections were always fixt to their proper *Objects*, and never exceeded the just *Limits* of Reason; and his *Appetites* were always moderated by his *Understanding*, and

and never transgressed the bounds of *Temperance* and *Nature*. His Conversation among men was most *innocent* and *candid*, *free* and *ingenuous*; neither *vain* nor *morose*, *haughty* nor *sordid*, but equally poised between all Extreams. He was *just* without Partiality, *humble* without Affectation, *charitable* and *beneficent* without Noise or Respect of Persons. His Zeal was *wise*, *temperate*, and *substantial*, such as did not spend it self in a furious *Contention* for, or *Opposition* to things of an indifferent Nature, but it quietly submitted to the Customs of his Country and of the Church in which he was born and educated; and all his Invectives were against *Hypocrisie* and *Immorality*, which were the only things to which his noble and generous Temper could never be reconciled. In a word, his whole Religion was *modest* and *serious*, and affected rather to be *seen* than to be *heard*, and to *be* than to be *seen*. His Heavenly-mindedness was such as rendred him neither too *sowre*, nor too *talkative*; and his Patience was always equally distant from *Stupidity* and *Effeminacy* For so when he endured that miserable Death of the Cross, he suffered like a Man that was *sensible* of Pain, and yet very well knew how to *undergo* it as *became* him. For as, on the one hand, he did not breathe out his Soul like an *effeminate* Epicure, in *whining* Complaints and *wretched* Lamentations; so neither, on the other hand, did he give up the Ghost like a *fanting* Stoick in a *huffing* Contempt of Death, or an *affected* Insensibility of Pain and Misery. But from the beginning to the end he acted his Part in that bloudy Tragedy, as one that was neither *Insensible* of Torment, nor

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conquered by it. For the last words which he breathed, which were a hearty Prayer for his Murderers, manifested his Soul to be *calm* and *serene* under all the Agonies of his Body. Thus is his great Example entirely composed of those excellent Vertues, that are the proper Graces and Ornaments of Humane Nature. Now though there be some Actions of our Saviour's Life which were never intended for our *Imitation, viz.* such wherein he either *exercised* or *proved* and *asserted* his Divine Authority; yet whatsoever he did of precise *Morality*, and in pursuance to his own *Laws*, he *designed* and *intended* for our Imitation. So that in all such matters; as his *Law* is to be our *Map* and *Rule*; so his *Practice* is to be our *Guide* and *President*.

For this is the great End of our Religion, to which God hath *predestinated* us, namely, to be *conformable to the Image of his Son*, Rom. viii. 29. and in this consists our *putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ*, namely, in *imitating* his Manners, and *following* the Garb and Fashion of his Conversation; and accordingly our Saviour tells his Disciples, *John* xiii. 15. *I have given you an Example* (that is of Humility and Charity) *that you should do as I have done to you*; and 'tis one of his great Commands that we should *learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart*, with a promise, that in so doing, *we should find rest unto our Souls*, Mat. xi. 29.

Wherefore if we would lead a Holy Life, pursuant to our Holy Resolution, we must set holy Examples before our eyes, and especially that most holy one of our blessed Saviour. We must *peruse* the History of his sacred Life, and diligently

observe

obſerve his Carriage and Demeanour in all thoſe Capacities and Circumſtances wherein he was placed, and cloſely *apply* it to all our ſelves as a perfect Pattern of Action. *Thus* and *thus* did my Saviour, *Sic ille manus, ſic ora—ſo* he demeaned himſelf when he was in my Circumſtances, after *this manner* he acted, and *thus* he ſuffered; and can I follow a more *glorious* Example; nay, would it not be a burning Shame for me not to *imitate* his *Manners* whilſt I profeſs my ſelf his *Diſciple?* Think, O my Soul, what would we have now done, if he were in *thy* Condition, and had *thy* Temptations before him. Would he have *pawned* his Innocence for ſuch a *Trifle*, or *proſtituted* himſelf to ſuch a *baſe*, *infamous* Action, to avoid ſuch an *inconſiderable* Inconvenience? No, doubtleſs he *would not*; and art thou not aſhamed to *comply* with ſuch a Temptation, knowing with what Indignation thy Saviour would have *rejected* it? If we would but thus inure our ſelves to *reflect* upon our Saviour's Example, and *apply* it to, and *compare* it with our own Actions, we cannot imagine with what a divine *Emulation* it would inſpire us; how it would *animate* our Weakneſſes, and *ſhame* our Irregularities, and *inamour* our Souls with true Virtue and Goodneſs.

III. To the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould frequently apply our ſelves for *Advice* and *Direction* to our *ſpiritual Guides*. For it is to be conſidered, that men of a *ſecular* Life and Converſation are generally ſo engaged in the Buſineſs and Affairs of this World, that they very rarely acquire Skill enough in Religion to conduct themſelves ſafely

to Heaven through all those Difficulties and Temptations that lie in their way. For before they can be capable to guide themselves safely, they must in all points of great moment be able to distinguish between *Truth* and *Falshood*, and to make a difference between *good* and *evil*, which in many Instances do border so *near upon* one another, that it requires much greater Skill and Knowledge than the Generality of Men are Masters of to discern the *Point* and *Boundary* that parts them. And supposing their *Understandings* to be so well instructed as to be able to resolve them truly in all those doubtful Cases wherein they are or may be concerned, yet still there is generally such a fault in their *Wills*, as renders them incompetent Judges for themselves; and that is, That through an Excess of *Self-love* they are prone to be *partial* in their own Concerns, and consequently, unless the Case be very *plain*, to vote that *true* that is most for their Interest, and *determine* on that side they are most inclined to. For when a Man's Judgment is before in *Suspence*, a very *small* weight of Interest on the *wrong* side of the Question, usually turns the Scale against the *greater* probability on the *right*. And whilst Interest *fees* mens Affections, and their Affections *bribe* their Judgments, it will be almost impossible for them to secure their Innocence whilst they determine all Cases of Right and Wrong at the Tribunal of their own Reason. For when once they have determined *falsly* (as *many times* to be sure they will) besides the many single Miscarriages in *Practice* that will be consequent thereunto; by practising on upon their *false* Determinations,

they

they will intangle themselves in such evil *Customs* and *Habits*, as by that time they have *discovered* the Error of their *Judgment*, will render it very difficult for them to *correct* the Error of their *Practice*. And therefore to secure our selves in our Innocence and Duty, it is mighty necessary, that in all doubtful Cases we should appeal from *our selves* to the Judgment of *others*, who having no Interest to *bias* them one way or t'other, will be much more *impartial*, and therefore (if they have but *equal* Understanding) more *competent* Judges of our Case than our selves.

Upon both which accounts the Christian Religion hath wisely *separated* an Order of Men from the World to be the *Guides* and *Conducts* of Souls, to *oversee* and *direct* the secular Flock, who upon the above-mentioned accounts cannot be supposed to be in *all* Cases competent Guides for themselves. For 'twas to this purpose that our Saviour before his Ascension Commissioned his Disciples, *Mat.* xxviii. 18, 19, 20. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* And that he did not intend this meerly for a *temporary* Commission which was to *expire* with the first *Bishops* and *Propagators* of the Gospel, but designed to have it *derived* from their hands to all the *succeedings* Ages of Christianity, is evident not only from the Promise annexed to it, that *he would be with them to the end of the world*, which plainly shews that 'twas to continue in force

till *then*; but also from hence, that they to whom this Commission was *immediately* given, did *actually* derive it to others, 2 *Tim.* i 6. with a strict Charge that *these* also should *successively* derive it to others, *Tit.* i. 5.

And as by this *perpetual* Commission Christ hath Established a Succession of Men to be the *Guides* of Souls to the end of the World, so he hath obliged all Christian People to *attend to* and *respect* them as such. For *he that heareth you*, saith he, *heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me*, Lux. x. 16. and 1 Cor. iv. 1. the Apostle injoins all Christians *to account of these spiritual guides as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; so also, 1 *Thess.* v. 12, 13. he earnestly *beseeches them*, as a matter of vast importance, *that they would know them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and were to admonish them, and esteem them very highly in love for their works sake*; and *Heb.* xiii. 17. he gives this Injunction, *Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.*

There being therefore an Order of men that are thus *sanctified* and *set apart* from the World, by the Commission of our Saviour, to *consult* the various Necessities of Souls, and *administer* to them in all their religious Concerns; it would doubtless mightily contribute to their successful *Progress* in the Christian Warfare, if in all their *straights* and *difficulties* men would *apply* themselves

to

to them for Counsel and Direction with such Modesty and Sincerity as they ought to do. For besides that they might reasonably expect a greater *Blessing* upon *their* Counsels than *other* mens, they being *commissioned* Guides under the great Shepherd of Souls, who, we must needs suppose, will more especially *co-operate* with the Means of his own Ordination; besides this, I say, they being persons that are wholly *devoted* to the Study and Ministries of Religion, must needs be supposed *cæteris paribus*, to have a farther *Insight* into the Cases of Souls, into their *Dangers* and *Refuges*, *Diseases* and *Remedies*, and consequently to be better able to *counsel* and *direct* them, than men of a *secular* Life and Conversation. If therefore men would be but so kind to themselves, as to apply themselves, in all their spiritual Exigences, to a *holy*, *wise*, and *well instructed* Guide; to *uncover* their Sores, *lay open* their Cases, and *reveal* the Secrets of their Souls to him, so far as it is necessary to enable him to make proper Applications; it is not to be expressed what a *vast* Advantage they might make of him. He would be instead of a *good Genius* or *Tutelar Angel* to their Souls, to suggest many a good *Thought* to them, and feed their Meditations with many an useful *Notion*; to enable them to *extract* from the Articles of their Belief, their just and proper Inferences, and *reduce* them to practical Principles, to *rectifie* their Wandrings, and *extricate* them from their Doubts; to *comfort* them in their Sorrows, and *quicken* them in their Indispositions; to *warm* their Indifferences, and *moderate* their Zeal, so as that they may neither be *becalmed*

by the one, nor *overborn* by the too violent Guſts of the other, and in a word, to *direct* them to the proper Methods of *mortifying* their bad Inclinations, and *conducting* their Religion ſo, as to render it more *eaſie* and *delightful* to them. Theſe and a great many other good Offices a *wiſe* and *well-experienced* Guide would be able to do men, if they would but take him along with them in their *Journey* to Heaven, and *modeſtly* ſubmit themſelves to his Conduct and Direction. And in thus doing they would act not only with greater *Security* to their Innocence, but with greater *ſatisfaction* to their Conſciences; becauſe then their Actions would be warranted, not only by their *private* Sentiments, which in many Caſes they will have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect, but alſo by the *better* and more *impartial* Judgment of an *authorized* Guide. For if under *his* Conduct they ſhould happen in any doubtful Inſtance to *err* from the way of Truth or Righteouſneſs, they will have this Satisfaction, That they have uſed the *beſt* Means to *prevent* it, the Means to which God himſelf hath *remitted* them, to whom alone they are accountable for their Actions, and who, as they may well imagine, will very much *compaſſionate* ſuch Miſcarriages as may follow upon their Submiſſion to his own Appointments. But if notwithſtanding the great Care that he hath taken of their Souls, in appointing them *Pilots* to ſteer them ſafely to Heaven, they will *embark* without them, and preſume ſo far upon their own Skill, as to venture to their eternal *Port* through all thoſe *Rocks* and *Quickſands* that lie in their way; they muſt needs be in great danger of miſcarrying, which

which if they do, they may thank *themselves* for it, and can expect no *Pity* from God, whose careful provision for their eternal Safety they have so ungratefully *contemned* and *neglected*.

IV. To our prosperous *Course* and *Progress* in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that, as often as we can, we should actually *intend* and *aim* at God in the Course of our Lives and Actions. For it is of mighty Advantage to the Conduct of a Man's Life to have his *Intentions* united, and continually to act with *one* steady *Drift* and *Aim*. Because while he intends but *one thing*, he unites the whole *Vigour* of his Nature in the pursuit of it, and is continually driving at it with all the *Force* and *Activity* of his Faculties. 'Tis an *Italian* Proverb. *From the man of one Business good Lord deliver me*; because, minding *that* only, he must needs be supposed to be the more *expert* and *sagacious* in it, and consequently the more able to *exceed* and *over-reach* another man who hath only minded it by the *by*; but when a man acts with a multifarious Intention, he must needs be *distracted* in his Operations, and the force of his Faculties being *divided* by the multiplicity of his Aims must needs be so *weakened* that 'twill be impossible for him to pursue any one of them with *Vigour* and *Activity*. 'Tis one of *Pythagoras* his Maxims, Δεῖ χὴ ἄνθρωπον ἕνα γίνεσθαι, *a man ought to be one*, *i. e.* so far as he is able, to fix all his Aims upon one *End*, and unite them in one *Center*, and not to suffer himself to be tossed hither and thither by *Independent* Designs and Intensions; because this will unavoidably *distract* him in his prosecutions, and so *divide* and *weaken* his Principles of

Action, that he will be able to do nothing to any Purpoſe. God therefore being the great Object of Religion, it is neceſſary, in order to our progreſs therein, that we ſhould, as much as in us lies, *reſpect* and *aim* at him in the whole Courſe of our Actions; that we ſhould continually *look up* to him as to the directing Star by which we are to *ſteer* our Motions, and conduct our whole Lives under a fixt Intention to *obey* his Will, and *imitate* his Nature.

And indeed unleſs we do this, we are not good Men in the Senſe and Judgment of Religion. For Religion, as ſuch, is a Rule of Divine *Worſhip*; and under this Notion the Chriſtian Religion in particular enjoys all its Duties, *viz.* of *Homage* and *Worſhip*, to God. For it requires us to *do all as unto God*, Col. iii. 23, and *to do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. that is, to do all in *Obedience* to him, and *Imitation* of him, from a ſincere Acknowledgment of the Perfections of his Nature, of his Sovereign Authority over us, and and immutable Right to rule and command us. Not that an *actual*, *explicit* Intention of *obeying* or *imitating* God is neceſſary to every good Action; for our occaſions of doing good, being ſo *infinite*, and ſo *often* occurring in our ſecular Affairs, and our Minds being ſo incapable, as they are, of attending *many* things *at once*; it is impoſſible for us actually to intend Obedience to God in *every* good thing we perform; but that, in the *general*, we ſhould heartily intend it, is indiſpenſably neceſſary to the conſecrating our beſt Actions, and adopting them into the Family of Religion. For that we muſt obey God, is the Fundamental Law of Religion,

Religion, from whence all the particular Commands and Prohibitions of it do receive their Force and Obligation. So that unleſs we do what he commands with a *general Intention* of Mind to obey him, we do not act upon a Religious Obligation, and conſequently though our Actions ſhould be *materially* good, yet are they not *formally* Religious.

Now to the fixing and ſetling ſuch a *general Intention* in our Minds, it is neceſſary that in the particular Exerciſes of our Religion we ſhould, ſo far as we are able, *actually intend* and *aim* at God; that we ſhould throw by all other Ends, ſo far as we are able, and refer our Actions *directly* and *immediately* to him; in a word, that we ſhould *formally devote* and *dedicate* them to his bleſſed Will and Pleaſure, ſo as to be able to ſay, *this* and *this* I do *purely* to pleaſe God, with a *ſingle Intention* of Soul to *reſemble* and pleaſe him, to tranſcribe his Nature, and comply with his Will. For which end we muſt take care, as oft as we can, to perform our Religious Actions in ſuch a manner, as that no *ſecular* Ends may interpoſe between God and our Intentions; to be as *private* and as *modeſt* as we can in our Religion, and not expoſe it any more than needs muſt to the Eye of the World, leſt *Applauſe* and *Reputation* ſhould intrude themſelves upon us, and carry away our *Intention* from God. For thus our Saviour adviſes in the Caſe of Charity and Prayer, *Mat.* vi. 1, 7. That *we ſhould not do our alms before men, to be ſeen of them*, nor *ſound a trumpet before them*, to make the Streets ring of our Charity; nay, if poſſible, *that we ſhould not let our left hand know what our right*

right hand doth; but that our Alms should be *secret*, and known only to God and our selves; and that when we *pray*, we should not affect to make a pompous shew of it, *in the Synagogues and corners of the streets*, but *that we should enter into our Closets and shut our door*, and in the most private manner unbosom our Souls to God; the sense of all which is, that we should endeavour, as far as in us lies, so to *circumstantiate* our Charity and Devotion, as not to give any Opportunity to secular Ends and Aims to obtrude themselves upon us, to *mingle* with our pious *Intentions*, and *deflower* the Purity of them.

Not that I think it *unlawful* for a Man to intend any thing but God in the Discharge of his Duty, or that our Intention is *bad*, when it immediately respects any *worldly* End, such as Pleasure, or Profit, or Honour, which are proposed by God himself as Arguments to perswade Men to their Duty; and what hurt can it be for Men to *aim* at that in the discharge of their Duty, which God hath proposed to them as an *Encouragement* to it? 'Tis true if wordly Advantage be the *only* or *chief* End we aim at, our *Intention* is naught, and so are all the *Actions* thence proceeding; but if together with that we do so heartily *intend* and *aim* to please God and conform our selves to his blessed Will and Nature, as to continue in the path of our Duty to him, not only when we have no prospect of outward Advantages to induce us to it, but when outward Evils and Inconveniences lie in our way, we need not doubt but our Intention is truly *good* and *sincere*, notwithstanding those immediate Respects which it many times hath to

secular

ſecular Ends and Inducements. But yet it is certain that the *more* it reſpects theſe, the more *imperfect* it is, and the more liable to be vanquiſhed by outward Temptations. For it's a plain ſign that 'tis conſcious of its own Weakneſs, when it dares not ſtand alone, but is fain to call in to it the Aſſiſtance of theſe worldly Ends to ſupport and defend it; and the leſs of worldly Aim there is in our Religious Intention, to be ſure the more *pure* and *ſimple* it is, and the more of *ſubſtantial* Piety there is in it; and though it may be truly ſincere notwithſtanding its being *compounded* with ſecular Aims and Reſpects, yet the more of theſe there is in it, the *weaker* and more *unſtable* it muſt neceſſarily be. For, our Mind being *finite*, cannot poſſibly intend many things, with *equal* Strength and Vigour, as it can do *one*; and when its Intention, is *diſperſed* among various Objects it muſt neceſſarily be more *languid* than when 'tis *collected*, *united*, and *fixt* upon one; and conſequently, the *more* a man's Intention reſpects the World, the *leſs*, in proportion, it muſt reſpect God, and ſo on the contrary. And then the leſs a man reſpects *God* in his Duty, and the more he reſpects the *World*, the more liable he will be to the Temptations of worldly Loſs or Advantage. For when thoſe Advantages which he ſo much reſpects lie on the *oppoſite* ſide to his Duty, to be ſure he will be ſo much the more *inclined* to deſert it; and as often as Fortune ſhifts ſides, and carries with it the Advantages of Pleaſure, Profit, or Honour, from *Virtue* to *Vice*, or from *Vice* to *Virtue*, he will ſtill be ready to *face about* with it, and be always *veering* like a Weather-cock to a contrary

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Point upon every Change of Wind. Whereas when a Man's Intention *purely* reſpects God, 'twill be *immoveably* fixt among all the Changes and Alterations from without. For there is no outward Change or *Capricio* of Fortune can hinder a Man from pleaſing God, whoſe Love to us depends not upon our being *poor* or *rich*, *pleaſed* or *pained*, *depreſſed* or *advanced*, but upon our being truly *vertuous* and *religious*. And therefore if our Aim be *purely* to pleaſe him, we ſhall be ſure to continue ſo, which ſide ſoever Fortune ſmiles upon.

Wherefore to our ſucceſsful Progreſs in Religion it is highly neceſſary that, ſo far as in us lies, we ſhould *abſtract* and *ſeparate* our Religious Intentions from all theſe *worldly* Reſpects; and this muſt be done by looking frequently up to God, and actually *referring* and *dedicating* our Actions to him; by ſhutting our Eyes, when we are entring upon any Duty, to all worldly Conſiderations, and determining with our ſelves, *this* I will do purely becauſe 'tis *Godlike*, or becauſe God hath *commanded* it; whether I ſhall be *commended* or *diſgraced* for it, whether I ſhall *get* or *loſe* by it I will not now regard, it is ſufficient that it is *good*, and that God hath commanded it, and therefore for this Reaſon *only* I will do it, without any other Reſpect or Conſideration. By which means we ſhall by degrees ſo *purifie* our Intentions, and *refine* them from worldly Aims, that we ſhall be able to act *vigorouſly* in Religion without any other Reſpect but that of *pleaſing* God, and *conforming* our ſelves to his Will and Nature. And when once we can do thus, we are in a great forward-

forwardness in Religion. For now the Will of *God* hath got such an Ascendant over *ours*, that as we can cheerfully obey him without *external* Inducements, so we can freely contemn all Inducements *to the contrary*, and it being our *great* and *chief* Aim to *please* and be *like* him, the things that are *without* us will have very little Power to move us one way or t'other. Because now our great Aim is *above* them, and our Eyes are so stedfastly *fixt* upon God, that we are not at leisure to *regard* them: And our Mind being thus *indisposed* to listen to the restless Importunities of *external* Goods and Evils, our Innocence is safe, and we may pass triumphantly through all their Temptations. 'Tis a noble Saying of *Epictetus*, lib. 2. c. 19. Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως ἐκβαλεῖν λύπην, φόβον, ἐπιθυμίαν, &c. εἰ μὴ πρὸς μόνον τὸ θεὸν ἀποβλέπουλα, ἐκείνῳ μόνῳ προστατοῦντα, τοῖς ἐκείνου προστάγμασι καθωσιωμένον, *i. e.* "There is no other way for a Man to eject Sor-"row, and Fear, and Lust from his Soul, but by "looking up to God alone, and resigning our "selves to him only, and devoting our Lives to "the Obedience of his Commandments. And elsewhere he tells his Scholars, that the main thing which he drove at was, Ἀπολελύσαι ὑμᾶς ἐλευθέρους, εὐδαιμονοῦντας, εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἀφορῶντας, ἐν παντὶ μικρῷ καὶ μεγάλῳ, *i e.* "To make them free and blessed by "persuading them to look up to God in every "thing whether it be small or great, *lib.* 2. *c.* 19. For whilst in our religious Intentions we do *too much* respect the things that are without us, we do, in a great measure, *intrust* them with our Vertue and Religion; and so far as we make them Inducements to our Duties, so far it is in their Power

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to *ſecure* or *betray* it. As for inſtance, ſo much as I aim at *Profit* in any *religious* Action, ſo much *Power* Profit hath over my Religion, and if the ſame Profit ſhould invite me to a *wicked* Action, it will have as much Power to *betray* my Religion, as it had to *ſecure* it; for the ſame Gain will have the ſame Influence on me when it tempts me to *ſin*, as it hath when it tempts me to *obey*. What a dangerous thing therefore is it for men to intruſt ſuch a treaſure as their Innocence and Religion in ſuch *irreſponſible* hands, and to give thoſe outward things which are the Temptations of *Vice*, a power to diſpoſe of their *Virtue*? What is this but to commit the keeping of our *Sheep* to a *Wolf*, or of our *Chaſtity* to a *Goat*? Wherefore as we would be ſafe in our religious *Progreſs*, it highly concerns us to *purifie* our good Intentions ſo far as we are able from all *worldly* Reſpects, and to level them *directly* and *immediately* at God. And in order hereunto,

V. To render the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare ſucceſsful, it is alſo neceſſary that we poſſeſs our Minds with an awful Apprehenſion of God's *Preſence* with, and *Inſpection* over us. Among the many excellent Rules which the Heathen Moraliſts have given for the Conduct of men's Lives, this is one, That in the whole Courſe of their Lives they ſhould imagine ſome *excellent perſon*, for whom they have a great *Veneration*, to be preſent with 'em, as a *Witneſs* and *Spectator* of all their Actions. And it was wholeſome Advice that one gave his *lewd* Friend, that he ſhould hang the Picture of his *grave* and *ſerious* Father in the Room where he was wont to celebrate his

his *Debauches*; imagining that the *ſevere* eye of the good old Man, though but in *Effigie*, would give a check to the *wanton* Sallies of the intemperate Youth. And if the bare *Fiction* of a Man's being *preſent* with us, or his being preſent only in a *dead* Picture, may be rationally ſuppoſed to have ſo ſtrong an Influence on our Actions: of how much greater Force muſt our firm *Belief* and *Senſe* of God's preſence with us be to regulate our Lives and Actions; and that he is thus *preſent* with us we have ſufficient reaſon to conclude, not only from the infinite *Plenitude* of his Eſſence, which being *ſelf-exiſtent* could not be *bounded* or *limited* by any Cauſe from without, and therefore muſt neceſſarily be *boundleſs* and *immenſe*; but alſo from expreſs Aſſertions of Scripture, which aſſures us *that his eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*, Prov. xv. 3. *That he is a God at hand, and not a God afar off*; *and that no man can hide himſelf in ſecret places that he ſhall not ſee him*; *and that he fills heaven and earth*, Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. *and that we can go no whither from his preſence*, Pſal. cxxxix. 7, 8. *and that all things are naked open to his eyes*, Heb. iv. 13. that is, That the World is *ſurrounded* and *filled* with his Being, which is both the *Womb* that *contains*, and the *Soul* that *pervades* the Creation; and that being thus *preſent* with us where-ever we are, he muſt needs be ſuppoſed to have a conſtant *Inſpection* over us, and a clear *Senſe* and *Perception* of whatſoever we do.

And he being thus preſent with us in *Reality*, and not in *Fiction* or *Picture*, it muſt doubtleſs be of mighty avail to the Well-government of our Lives;

Lives; to be continually inspired with an *actual* and *vigorous* Sense of it. And therefore our Saviour commands us to do good from a lively Sense that God's eye is upon us, *Mat.* vi. 4, 6. *That our father who sees us in secret shall reward us openly.* And this I conceive to be the meaning of that comprehensive Precept which God gave to *Abraham, Walk before me and be thou perfect*, Gen. xvii. 1. *i. e.* behave thy self as one that art sensible thou art always in my Presence, and under my eye, and in the sense of this, see thou beest *upright* and *sincere*, and that thou dost not vainly attempt to impose upon me by any demure *Shews* or hypocritical *Pretences*. And the same is implied in that of the Apostle, *Col.* iii. 22. *Servants obey in all things your Masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasres, but in singleness of heart, fearing God, i. e.* be not like those Servants that do their Duty for no other end but to ingratiate themselves with their Masters, and accordingly do it no longer than while their Masters eye is upon them; but do you it with all *Sincerity*, out of an awful respect to God, considering that when Man's Eye is *off*; his eye is *upon* you. The sense of all which is, that after the example of Holy *David*, Psal. xvi 8. we should endeavour *to set the Lord always before us*, and to possess our minds with a quick and lively Sense of his being continually *present* with us, wheresoever we are, and whatsoever we are about, and a constant *Witness* and *Spectator* of all our Actions.

And this we shall find will be of unspeakable Use to us in the whole *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare. For,

1. It

1. It will mightily restrain us from all sinful Actions. For as S. *Austin* observes, the greatest part of Sin is taken away if a Man hath but a *Witness* of his Conversation; and much more if he be sensible that he hath such a Witness as God, with whom he is infinitely more concerned than with all the World besides; who is the *Judge* of all his Actions, the *Rewarder* of Vertue, and *Punisher* of Vice, the eternal Source of all those *Evils* or *Goods* that he can *fear* or *hope for*. And who but a Man that is desperately wicked, dares do an evil Action in the *Presence* and *Sight* of such a formidable Witness? For suppose you beheld this Almighty Being sitting upon a Cloud in some visible Form, with a Thunder-bolt in his hand; and from thence looking down upon you, *curiously* observing how you demean your selves, and *closely* pursuing you with his awful eye through all your dark *Retreats* and *Privacies*; would not the thought of any Action that is displeasing to him be ready to strike you into *Trembling* and *Horrour*? Could you imagine your selves to be any where secure in your Wickeness while you saw your selves uncovered to his All-seeing Eyes, to which your Closets lie as open as your Halls, and your Hearts as the High ways? Doubtless you could not. Why now, the lively *Belief* and *Apprehension* of a thing, is equivalent to a *sensible* Perception. If I were *throughly assured* that the King were listening behind the Curtain, and heard every word that is spoken in the Room, I should doubtless be as much afraid of talking Treason against him, though I saw him *not*, as if he stood just *before* me. And so though God be with me in an

invisible manner, and I am not able to see him through that thick Curtain of Matter which is drawn between me and his Spiritual Essence, yet if I *firmly believe* that he is *behind* it, and am constantly aware that he is *listening* to what I *say*, and *prying* into what I *do*, that he keeps *Intelligence* with my *Thoughts*, and is intimately *acquainted* with all my *Designs* and *Intentions*, it will render me as cautious of my Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, as if I saw him standing by me in a *visible Shechinah* or *Glory*, to *record* every Passage of my Life, and *enter* into his Debt-Books every *item* of my Guilt, against the great Day of Accounts: But how much the want of such a due Apprehension of God's *Presence* with us, lets men loose to all Wickedness, may be collected from that of the Prophet, *Ezek.* ix. 9. *The iniquity of the house of Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of bloud, and the city full of perverseness*, and how comes this to pass, Why, *they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not*; whereas, on the contrary, *David* attributes his *keeping God's Precepts and Testimonies*, to the lively Sense he had that his ways were always *before* God, *i. e.* lay open to his *Sight* and *Inspection*, Psal. cxix. 168. But then,

2. Such a lively Sense of God's *Presence* with, and *Inspection* over us, will be of mighty Use to keep us *sincere* and *upright* in the whole Course of our Actions. For, alas! To what purpose should we *dissemble* and *conceal* our Wickedness from the eye of the World, so long as we *lie open* to the eye of God? Would you not think it very strange to see a Company of Prisoners, that within a few Hours

Hours are to be tried for their Lives, sollicitously concerning themselves how to appear lovely and innocent *to one another*, hiding their Deformities, and disguising their Crimes with *artificial* Pretexts and Apologies, that so they may *cheat* and *juggle* one another into a mutual good Opinion of themselves; but in the mean time take no notice of their *Judge*, who sits before them upon the Bench, observing all their *Tricks* and *Impostures*, and holds their Lives in his Hands, being commissionated to *discharge* or *condemn* them according as he finds them *innocent* or *guilty*. And yet just thus do those men act whose Religion is nothing but a vain Ostentation and Ambition of popular applause; they *skrew* their Looks, *study* their Actions, *force* their Inclinations, and all to compose themselves into an outward *Semblance* of Religion; they imploy a world of Care and Art to *disguise* themselves, and with the Colours of Sanctity to *varnish* their unhallowed Natures, they openly *deny* themselves their deareſt Pleasures, and in the View of the World are many times forced to act against the grain of their strongest Inclinations; and all this to *mask* their depraved Tempers, that they may *appear* what they *are not*, in the view of the World, and juggle themselves into a *Saint-like* Reputation: but whilst they are thus industriously *courting* the good Opinion of their Fellow-prisoners, their All-seeing *Judge*, upon whose final Sentence their everlasting Fate depends, is *present* with them; and, though they take no more notice of him than if he were a *Cypher* in the World, is perfectly *conscious* to all their Artifice, and *sees through* all their hypocritical Disguises,

and will e'er long *unmask* and *expose* them to the View and Scorn of all the World. And this considered, what a ridiculous Folly is *Hypocrisie*, that *hides* us only from those that have *little* or *nothing* to do with us, but leaves us *bare* and *naked* to his eye with whom we are most *concerned*. Alas! what a poor Project is it to take so much pains, as we do, to recommend our selves to men, to men that must stand at the *same* Tribunal, and undergo the *same* Judgment with our selves? For what will their *good* Opinion avail us, if the Judge *disapprove* us, in whose hands our Lives and Souls are? If he think *well* of us, we are safe, though all the World should condemn us; but if he condemn us, though every Creature should *acquit*, they cannot *rescue* us from his Sentence. But alas! how *differently* soever God and Men may think of us *now*, yet when he comes to discover his Thoughts of us, in his publick Judgment and Sentence, all the World will be of *his* Mind; and if we *stand right* in his Opinion, we shall be *applauded* by the whole Universe, howsoever we may be vilified now; as on the contrary, if he *condemn* us, we shall be sure to be *hissed* at throughout all the Congregation of Spirits, how *gloriously* soever we may be thought of at present. And by how much the better we are esteemed of *now*, by so much the more we shall be hissed at *then*, when the *Cheat* is discovered, and the hypocritical Vizor is pluckt from our Devils Faces.

This if Men duly considered, and fixt it in their Minds, would effectually cure them of all their *Hypocrysie*. For alas! what Hypocrisie can so *cunningly* disguise them, as to conceal 'em from Omnisci-

Omniſcience? If Men will be wicked therefore, they were e'en as good put on a *bold Face*, and be wicked *openly*; for 'tis to very little purpoſe for them to *ſneak* into Corners, unleſs they could find one *dark* enough to *conceal* them from God, and *cover* them from his All-ſeeing Eye. For why ſhould that Man be *aſhamed* or *afraid* to let a Boy or Neighbour be *conſcious* to his Wickedneſs, that never ſcruples to commit it in the open *View* of the dreadful Majeſty of Heaven, by whoſe final Sentence his Everlaſting Fate muſt be decided?

And ſo, on the other hand, to what purpoſe ſhould we ſtudy to be more *devout* and *temperate*, *ſober*, and *charitable* in the View of the World, than we are in our Retirements, when we have no other Eye but God's upon us? That which we are mainly concerned in, is to approve our ſelves to *him*, and if we can do this, what great matter is it though our *Cloſet* be all our *Stage*, and *Heaven* our only *Spectator*? God *hears* the ſofteſt Whiſpers of our Souls, and *ſees* through all our honeſt Intentions, and our moſt *ſecret* Virtues are as *legible* to his Eye as if they were written on our Foreheads with a Sun-beam. We need no Trumpet to proclaim our Alms in his *Ears*, for he knows by whom ſuch a poor Man was *relieved*, ſuch a ſtarving Family *ſuccoured*, though we ſhould not ſuperſcribe our *Names* upon our Charity, nor *let our left hand know what our right hand hath done*. And if, by the *ſincere* diſcharge of our Duty, we have *approved* our ſelves to God, what need we concern our ſelves any farther? ſince 'tis not from *Men*, but from *God*, that we expect the *Recompence*

of our Obedience. No doubtless, did we but live under the constant sense of God's *Presence* with, and *Inspection* over us, we should regard him *much more* in every good Action, and the good Opinion of the World *much less* than we do; and the more *secret* our good Deeds were, the more we should *rejoyce* in them, because they would give us a *stronger* Testimony of our *Simplicity* and *Sincerity*. For what should move us to be good when God only sees us, but pure respect to his Authority, and an *honest* Intention of obeying him? And if *Obedience* be our Design, the more *private* our good Deeds are, the more *Pleasure* they will afford us, because those good Deeds have *most* of Obedience in them, that have *least* of the Theatre.

VI. To prosper our *Course* and *Progress* in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary, that we should frequently *examine* and *review* our own Actions. For this our Religion enjoyns as a necessary Part of the *militant* Life of a Christian. So 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. *Examine your selves whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves*; and particularly, it is injoyned as a proper Preparation to the Sacrament, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 28. So also *Gal.* vi. 4. *Let a man prove*, or *examine, his own work*: where the Greek word δοκιμάζειν, which in all these Texts we render to *prove* or *examine*, hath two Significations. First, to call our selves to *Account*, to *try* our *past* Actions by the Rule, whether they be good or evil; Secondly, To take such a due *Care* of our Actions as that upon a strict Trial of them we may be able to approve them to God and our own Consciences.

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In the *firſt* of which Senſes the New Teſtament doth moſt commonly underſtand it; namely, to call our ſelves to *Account*, and make a ſtrict *Survey* of our Actions, and paſs an impartial *Judgment* upon them, whether they are good or evil, and accordingly, 1 *Cor.* xi. 31. inſtead of δοκιμαζέτω in *Verſe* 28. i. e. *Let a man examine himſelf*, the Apoſtle uſes as a Synonymous Phraſe, διακρίναμεν *i. e.* if we *judge our ſelves*, if we *ſummon* our paſt Actions before the *Tribunal* of our Conſciences, and *try* and *examine* them by the Rule whether they are good or evil, and according as we find them, to *approve* or *condemn* our ſelves for them

And this is a Duty of great Neceſſity to the ſucceſsful Proſecution of our Chriſtian Warfare. For unleſs we do frequently *reflect* upon our ſelves, and take a *ſtrict* account of our paſt Actions and Behaviour, we ſhall incur a Thouſand Errours and Immoralities in the Hurry of our ſecular Occaſions, without taking any *notice* of them, and thoſe ſins which we *heedleſly* commit, and never *think of* afterwards, though at firſt perhaps they may have little or no *Malice* in them, do yet leave a *malicious* Infuſion behind them, and *infect* the Will with bad Inclinations, and inſenſibly *diſpoſe* it to *wilful* and *deliberate* Sins. For the Pleaſure of *one* bad Action will be ſtill inviting us to *another*, and that to a *third*, and ſo we ſhall be inconſiderately *tolled* on from Sin toSin in the courſe of a *heedleſs* and *unreflecting* Life, till, before ever we are aware, our Inclination to the Sin which we have ſo heedleſly *repeated*, becomes too ſtrong for our pious *Reſolution*. For when we have *careleſly* permitted

one Sin to break through our Fence, that will open a gap for *another* to follow, and if this be not presently *stopt* by Repentance, 'twill make the Breach yet *wider* for *others*, and those again for *others*, till at last they have quite *trodden down* our good Resolution, and made a *Through-fare* in our Wills for a Custom of sinning. But if we frequently *reflect* upon, and *examine* our selves, 'tis impossible our Faults should long escape our *Discovery*, and we shall be sure to *see* them time enough to *correct* and *amend* them before they are too *deeply* rooted in our Natures, and have wound themselves too *far* into our Inclinations; and a wound in our *Innocence*, as well as our Bodies, may be easily cured if it be taken *in time*, but if it be *neglected* too long, it will *rankle*, by degrees, into an incurable Gangrene.

And as frequent *Self-Examination* is a great *Bridle* to our *Sin*, so it is also an effectual *Spur* to our *Vertue*. For as when a Man reflects upon his Sins and Miscarriages, and considers *how* and *where* he hath done amiss, his Conscience will be presently *urging* and *exciting* him to Repentance and Amendment; so when he reflects upon his own Vertue and Sincerity, his Conscience will *smile upon* and *crown* him with Applauses, and give him such a *sweet* and *grateful* Relish of his own Actions, as will mightily *incourage* him to *persevere* in Well-doing. For in all our *Self-Examinations*, we taste this difference between *Good* and *Evil*, the *Sweetness* of that, and the *Bitterness* of this, and consequently, the oftner we do so, the more we shall be sure to *like* and *approve* of the one, and to *dislike* and *nauseate* the other.

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Wherefore to secure a good Success to this our Christian Warfare, as it is necessary, especially *at first*, that we should every *Morning*, before we go into the World, repeat and inforce our good *Resolution*; so it is no less requisite, especially till we have made some *considerable* Progress, that we should every *Night*, when we are withdrawn from the World, strictly *examine* the Performances of the Day, whether they are such as do comport with our solemn Engagements. And if upon an impartial Survey, it appear that they do, though as yet it be but *weakly* and *imperfectly*, let us *attend* to the Sence of our own Minds, to that silent Melody that resounds from our Consciences to our Actions, and so lie down in Peace, *blessing* and *adoring* that Grace, by which we have been *assisted* and *preserved*. Or if it appear that we have been *unwarily* faulty, for want of due Care and Watchfulness, let us resolve to take more *Care* for the future, and thereby to put a timely *Stop* to our Sin, before it hath too far *insinuated* into our Will and Inclinations; but if we are conscious of any *wilful* Breach upon our Morning Vows of Obedience, let us *lament* and *bewail* it with Shame and Indignation. What have I done, O wretched *Traitor* that I am, to God and my own Soul! I have *falsified* my Vows to Heaven, and *broke* those Sacred Bands by which I was *tied up* from my Lusts and my Ruine. What can I *plead* for my self, *base* and *unworthy* that I am? With what Face can I go into his dreadful Presence, whom I have so often *mocked* with my *treacherous* Promises of Amendment? Yet go I will, though I am all *ashamed* and *confounded*, and *confess* and *bewail* mine Iniquity before him.

If

If we would but take care thus to call our ſelves to *Account* every Night and impartially to *cenſure* the Actions of the Day, it is not to be imagined how faſt 'twould ſet us *forward* in our Chriſtian Warfare; how much the *Reflection* on a *well-ſpent* Day would *cheer* and *enliven* us; how the *grateful* Senſe of it would *ſpirit* our Faculties, and *encourage* us to go on againſt all Oppoſitions; how much the *Review* of the Day would contribute to make our Reaſon more *vigilant*, and our Conſciences more *tender* for the future; how much the Pleaſure of our Sins would be *allayed* and *abated*, by the *ſtinging* Reflections we ſhould make upon them, and how much the Dread of having the ſame Reflections *repeated* to us at Night, would ſecure us againſt the Temptations of the Day.

VII. To proſper the *Courſe* of our Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould be very *watchful* and *circumſpect*. For this alſo is one of thoſe *militant* Duties which the Goſpel enjoyns us. Thus *Matt.* xxvi. 41. *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation*, and *Mark* xiii. 37. *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, watch:* ſo alſo, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 13. *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit your ſelves like men*; and 1 *Theſ.* v. 6. *Wherefore let us not ſleep, as do others, but let us watch and be ſober*; where the Nature of the Duty is plainly diſcovered by its Oppoſite or Contrary, *Let us not ſleep, but watch, i. e.* do not behave your ſelves like men that are *aſleep*, that take no Notice or Regard of what is done *by*, *to*, or *about them*; but be ſure you exerciſe a *faithful*, *prudent*, and *conſtant* Care over your own Actions, and thoſe manifold

Tempta-

Temptations that aſſault and ſurround you. And therefore elſewhere 'tis expreſt by *walking circumſpectly*, Eph. v. 15. *i.e.* looking round about you, *weighing* the nature and circumſtances of your Actions, and uſing all honeſt Care, either to *prevent* the Temptations that threaten you, or to *provide* againſt them; ſo that, in ſhort, the ſenſe of this Duty is this, that we carefully avoid acting *raſhly* and *precipitantly* without *conſidering* beforehand the Nature of our Action whether it be good or evil; that in all *doubtful* and *ſuſpicious* Caſes we impartially *conſult* our Rule and Conſcience, and *look* before we *leap*, and take care to *ſatisfie* our ſelves of the Goodneſs of our *Deſigns*, before we put them into *Execution*; in a word, that we do not *careleſly* run our ſelves into Temptations, but, if poſſible, to *avoid* them; if not, to be ſure to *arm* our ſelves againſt them, and keep us *far off* from all ſin, eſpecially from that we are moſt *inclined* to, as is conſiſtent with our neceſſary Occaſions; or, in fewer words, 'tis to be always *well-adviſed* in what we do, whether it be good or evil; and if it be *evil*, to remove ſo far as we can, from all *Occaſions* that lead to it, and provide our ſelves with Conſiderations *againſt* it, and to keep them always *awake* in our Minds, that we may not be *ſurprized* by it unawares:

Which is a Duty indiſpenſably neceſſary for us in the whole Courſe of our Chriſtian Warfare. For whilſt we accuſtom our ſelves to act *raſhly* and *inconſiderately*, without bethinking beforehand what we ſay or do, we wander like blind Men in a Field that is full of *Pits* and *Quagmires* and

and are every moment in danger of ſtumbling into one miſchief or other, and ſhall certainly plunge our ſelves in many an evil Cuſtom before ever we have bethought our ſelves of the evil of it; and ſo inſtead of conquering our *old* Sins, we ſhall be ever and anon running our ſelves into *new* ones, and while we are running away from *one* evil, ſhall many times ſtumble into *another*, and to avoid the *Defects* of Vertue leap headlong into the *Exceſſes* of it. For in moſt moral Actions the Tranſition from the *utmoſt* of what is *lawful* into the *nearmoſt* of what is *ſinful* is indiſcernable; and that line which parts *this* Vertue from that neighbouring Vice is generally ſo *ſmall*, that 'tis hard to diſtinguiſh where they are *ſeparated*, and to fix the juſt *Boundary* whitherto we may go and no farther. But then conſidering that almoſt every Vertue lies in the *middle* between two ſinful *Extremes*, neither of which are ſeparated from it, by any *plain* or *viſible* Land-mark; how is it poſſible for us, without great *Care* of our Steps, to keep on ſtedfaſtly in the *right* Path, when there are ſo many *wrong* ones bordering upon it? For when we perceive we have wandered too far towards *either* Extreme, and are endeavouring to *retrieve* our ſelves, if we do not take great Care of our Steps, we ſhall be apt to wander as far the *other* way, and ſo ſtumble out of one Extreme into another. For he who lives *heedleſly* and *incuriouſly*, regards not how *near* he approaches to any Sin, provided he doth but keep himſelf out of it; and when once a Man takes the Liberty to go as near to any Sin as he thinks he lawfully *may*, it is a thouſand to one but he will be tranſported by his

his Inclination a great deal further than he *should*. So true is that of *Clem. Alex. Pædag.* lib. 2. c. 1. Ταχὺ γὸ καλαπίπλωσιν ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖν τὸ μὴ ἐξὸν, οἱ πάνλα δρῶντες ἃ ἐξὸν, *i. e.* They who will do all things that are *lawful*, will quickly be induced to do what is *unlawful*; especially if they be strongly inclined to it; because the very *Nearness* of what a Man loves, doth always render it more *tempting* and *alluring* to him. Thus he that hath a strong Inclination to *Lying*, can never be safe, so long as he allows himself to be excessive *talkative*; he that is vehemently propense to *fleshly Lust*, must needs indanger his Innocence if he come too near the farthermost Limits of a *modest* Freedom; and he whose Nature is prone to *Malice* and *Revenge*, cannot but run a mighty Hazard, if he indulge to himself the utmost degree of a *just* and *lawful* Resentment. For bad *Inclinations* are never so impatient of Restraint, as when they are within *Prospect* of their proper *Satisfactions*, and the Objects which attract them are *near* and *easie* to be injoyned. Upon which account it must needs be a very dangerous thing for such as are ingaged in the Christian Warfare, to live within *Sight* of the Temptations they are most inclined to; because the *nearer* they are to them, the more they will *court* and *importune* them, and while a Man comes near a beloved *Lust* and doth not enjoy it, he doth but *tantalize* himself, and *inrage* his Appetite after those vicious Satisfactions whose *alluring* Relishes he had almost *forgotten*. If therefore he would obtain a perfect Victory over his Lust, he must not only forbear to *act*, but also to *approach* it; at least, till he hath so far weaned his Inclination

Inclination from it, as that its *Nearness* ceases to be a *Temptation* to him. For Inclination, like all other Motion, is always *swiftest* when it is *nearest* its Centre, and when once 'tis within the *Reach* and *Attraction* of it, it hurries towards it with *Fury* and *Impatience*; and if in this its violent Rage, it happen to break out to its beloved Sin, and to taste the forbidden Pleasure of it, 'twill thereby immediately *recover* all its impaired Strength, and become as *headstrong* and *outragious* as ever; and so all that Ground which we get in a *Months* Abstinence from our Sin, we shall lose in a *Moments* Injoyment of it. Upon this account therefore it highly concerns us, if we would succeed in our Christian Warfare, to be very *watchful* and *circumspect*, to look well to our Steps, and not approach too near to *any* Sin, but especially to any that we are strongly *inclined* to.

VIII. To give us good Success in this our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we be *diligent* and *industrious* in our particular *Callings*. This is one of those instrumental Duties which our Religion prescribes throughout the whole *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare. Thus 1 *Thes* iv. 10, 11. *We beseech you, brethren, that you increase more and more, and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded ye*; and this, 2 *Thes* iii. 10. he backs with another, that *if any would not work, they should not eat, i. e.* That they should not be maintained in their Sloth and Idleness, and like *Drones*, be permitted to dwell at ease in the *Hive*, and devour the Labours of the more industrious

Bees;

Bees; and this, *ver.* xi. he calls *walking disorderly*, and *ver.* viii, and ix. he tells us, that 'twas for this cause that he rather chose to *work with his own hands* for his Livelihood, than to be maintained by them, as he might justly have demanded; that he might make himself an *Example* of Diligence for them to *follow*. So also, Eph. iv. 28. *Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, i. e.* imploying himself in some honest Calling, *that he may have to give to him that needs*; the Sense of all which is to oblige us to engage our selves in some Honest *Calling* or *Employment*, and to be *diligent* and *industrious* in it.

And how necessary this is to secure us in the whole *Course* and *Progress* of our Religion, appears from hence, that we are naturally a sort of very *active* Beings, that must be employed one way or other; that we have a Mind within us, that will be always in *Motion*; that being a *Spiritual* Substistence, and as such, of a quite different Nature from *dull* and *sluggish* Matter, will never admit of *Rest* and *Inactivity*; that derives all its Pleasures from *Action*, and hath nothing to live upon but the grateful relish of its own *Motions*. And this being the state of that *active* Principle within us, that *constitutes* us Men, we had need take great care to keep it *honestly* busied and imployed. For it being naturally such an exceeding *busie* thing, 'twill be sure to find something or other to work upon; and if it be not constantly imployed about *honest* and *lawful* things, 'twill quickly divert the current of its Motion another way, and exert its Activity upon *dishonest* and *unlawful* ones. And hence

hence it is, that, since the Apostacy of Humane Nature, God hath placed the generality of Men in such Circumstances wherein some honest *Calling*, and their *Diligence* and *Industry* therein, is indispensably *necessary* to their comfortable Subsistence. For he wisely considered, that such was the *Indisposition* of our *degenerate* Natures, to the *Divine* and *Spiritual* Exercises of Religion, that 'twould be impossible for *us*, in this *imperfect* State, to keep our Minds *always* intent upon them, to fix our Thoughts *continually* upon him, and exert our Powers without any *Pause* or *Interruption*, in perpetual Acts of *Love*, *Adoration* and *Imitation* of him; That there is such a *Repugnance* in our Tempers to these blessed Operations, that, if we had nothing else to do, they would soon grow *irksome* and *intolerable* to us; and therefore, lest being quite *tired* out with these Spiritual Acts of Religion, we should *hate* them, and so turn the Current of our Activity into the contrary Chanel, he hath placed us in such Circumstances, wherein we have frequent Opportunities to *rest* our wearied Minds from these *abstracted* Exercises in such *innocent* Employments as are necessary to our comfortable Subsistence in this World. So that by putting us under the necessity of imploying our selves in secular Trades and Callings, he hath taken care to *intercept* our Minds, that they may not fly off from the *pure* Acts of Religion into the contrary Impieties; and that when they are not *divinely*, they may be *innocently* imployed; and by diverting our Activity with *honest*, when it is weary of *spiritual* Exercise, he hath taken a wise Course to *confine* and *bound* it, and leave it less

Scope

Scope and Liberty to *rove* and make Incursions into *sinful* and *prohibited* Actions. And therefore, as *Aristotle* commends *Archytas* for his Invention of Rattles, because Children by playing with them are kept from breaking Vessels of *use*; So ought we to admire the Wisdom and Goodness of God, for thus necessitating us to exert our Activity in *secular* Arts and Trades, because by thus *innocently* imploying our *corrupt* and *busie* Natures, he hath taken an admirable Course to divert us from mischievous Actions.

And he having thus obliged us, by our necessities to follow some *honest* Calling for a comfortable Livelyhood, he expects that we should be *diligent* and *industrious* in that *particular* Calling wherein his Providence hath placed us. For otherwise he loses his End; which was to restrain us from being *sinfully* active, by necessitating us to be *innocently* so. And now that by putting us into those Necessities, by which we are put upon furnishing one another with those several Conveniences of Life, for the supply of which our respective Trades and Callings are intended, we, by being *diligent* therein, approve our selves *faithful* Servants in the great Family of God, and by *industriously* discharging those *particular* Offices wherein he hath placed us, we act as *dutiful* Ministers of his Providence towards one another. Because by so doing we supply those Wants and Necessities which God hath *made*, and which he hath made to be supplied by *our* Office and Ministeries; So that now to mind our own *Business*, is a part of our *Religion*, and 'tis that particular part to which God's Providence hath called us. If therefore we

are *idle* aud *neglective* in this, we are undutiful Servants to the common Maſter of the World, how officious ſoever we may be in *other* matters. For this is the proper Work of our Office, and therefore if we are unfaithful in *this*, we can be faithful in *nothing*. Should the Bailiff of a Family *neglect* letting his Maſter's Lands, and gathering in his Rents, he would be thought a *bad* Servant, how *diligent* ſoever he might be in the Kitchin or the Stables; and ſo if we are *remiſs* in our *particular* Offices and Employments, we are *bad* Servants to God, how *ſedulous* ſoever we may be either in the Offices of *other* Men, or in the *common* Services which we all owe him; and he that neglects his own Calling to ſerve God in his Cloſet, or in the Church, is like an unfaithful Steward that neglects providing for the Family, to dreſs the Garden, and water the Flowers.

'Tis true, as we ought not to devote to the *common* Service of God, that Time and Attendance which by the rules of Prudence and good Husbandry are appropriated to our *particular* Callings; ſo neither ought we to permit our particular Calling ſo to *ingroſs* our Time and Attendance, as to leave none for our Prayers and thoſe common Services, whether *private* or *publick*, which as Creatures and Chriſtians we are obliged to render to our Creator. For as he, that to *ſerve* God *neglects* his Calling, is a *religious* Truant, ſo he that to *attend* his Calling *neglects* to ſerve God, is a *prophane* Drudge. But for a truly *pious* and *induſtrious* Man, it is not at all difficult ſo to keep his Buſineſs and his Religion *apart*, as that they may not *interfere* with one another; and faithfully to

diſcharge

diſcharge whatſoever his *Calling* exacts of him, and yet leave void Spaces enough in his time to do all that his *Religion* requires.

Neither are we obliged to be ſo *induſtrious* in our Calling as to deny our ſelves any *moderate* Refreſhments or Recreations, which are not only *uſeful*, but ſometimes *neceſſary* to *breathe* our Spirits after they have been almoſt ſtifled in a Croud of Buſineſs, and *divert* our wearied Thoughts, which like the ſtrings of a Lute, by being *ſlackened* now and then, will ſound the ſweeter when they are *wound up* again. But then we ought to take care that we do not turn our *Phyſick* into *Food*, and make that our *Buſineſs* which ſhould be only our *Diverſion*; that our Recreations be *ſhort*, and apt to *refreſh*, but not to *ſteal away* our Minds from ſeverer Employments. For *long* Sports and Recreations are like a *large* Entry to a *little* Houſe, they take up ſo much Room in the *narrow* Compaſs of our Time, that there is not Space enough left in it for the more *uſeful* Apartments; and ſo far as our Sports do exceed the Meaſures of *neceſſary* and *convenient* Recreation, they are *unwarrantable* Encroachments upon our Calling and Religion. 'Tis true, as for the Meaſures of *Convenience*, they are not alike to *all*; for, as for thoſe whoſe large Fortunes have placed them beyond the Neceſſities of the World, they may *conveniently* allow themſelves *larger* Portions of Recreation than thoſe of meaner Circumſtances, who having not yet made a competent proviſion for their Families, are obliged in Juſtice to a more *conſtant* Induſtry, leſt they fall under S. *Paul*'s Cenſure of being *worſe than Infidels*. But how plentiful ſoever

our outward Condition may be, it will, by no means, warrant us either to live *idly*, or to make our *Recreations* our continual Employments; but the more Leisure we have from secular *Business*, the greater Portions of our Time we ought to consecrate to Religion; and since our *Bodies* and our *Families* are so liberally provided for, to be so much the more industrious in supplying the Necessities of our *Souls*, that so *these* may not be the only *miserable* things about us. But then our Natures being so *depraved*, as that they cannot dwell long on the severe Exercises of Religion, and yet so *active*, as that, if in the Intervals of our Religion they be not *innocently* imployed, they will be apt to run into *Mischief*, 'tis in our own Defence necessary, how prosperous soever our outward Condition may be, that we should find out some *honest* Business or other to keep our Activity *regularly* Exercised. And this will be no hard matter for us to do, considering how many *generous*, *liberal*, and *ingenuous* Employments there are fit for persons of the highest Rank and Condition. They may dedicate such Portions of their Time to the useful Studies of *Philosophy* or *History*, or of the *Laws* and *Customs* of their own Country; and such, to the *Inspection* of their own Estates, or to *overlook* and *govern* their Families, and such, to *examine* the Complaints of their Tenants, or the Necessities of their Neighbours, or to *reconcile* Differences, or *conciliate* Love and good Neighbourhood among those that are near or under them; in these, and such like Employments, they may *innocently* exercise their active Minds, and thereby not only divert themselves from *sinful* Courses,

Courſes, but alſo render themſelves very *uſeful* to the World.

But whatſoever our Condition in the World may be, it muſt doubtleſs be of very dangerous Conſequence to our Religion, not to be *innocently* and *uſefully* employed. For as the wiſe *Cato* hath obſerved, *Nihil agendo male agere diſces, i. e.* by accuſtoming your ſelf to do *nothing*, you will moſt certainly learn to do *ill*. For your *buſie* Mind, like Nature, will admit of no *vacuum*, but muſt be *always full* of one thing or other; and it can no ſooner diſmiſs its *pious* or *honeſt* thoughts, but *vicious* and *unlawful* ones will be ſwarming about it. For *religious*, *lawful*, and *ſinful* Objects, are the only Companions our Minds have to converſe with, and therefore ſince they muſt and will be converſing with *one* thing or *other*, we ought to take great care, that as ſoon as ever they have done entertaining *religious* Objects, they be preſently ſupplied and preſented with *lawful* ones, with ſome *honeſt* Buſineſs or *innocent* Diverſion; that ſo we may not be at leiſure to attend to thoſe *ſinful* Objects; which, in the others Abſence, will be perpetually *crouding* and *thruſting* themſelves upon us. For when we are neither *honeſtly* nor *religiouſly* imployed, we ſhall be perfectly at leiſure to attend to any Invitation to Sin; and ſince we muſt ſtill be doing one thing or other, our having nothing *elſe* to do, will be a ſtrong inducement to do that which is *evil*, and to ſpend our reſtleſs Activity in ſome *irregular* Courſe or other, accordingly as we are *tempted* and *inclined*. If we are of a *buſie* and *pragmatical* Temper, our Leiſure will preſently invite us to be

intermedling with other Folks Business, to be *tampering* with State Affairs and casting new Models of Government, and *censuring* the Wisdom of those publick Administrations of which we do not understand the Reasons: if we are of a *froward*, *peevish*, and *untractable* Temper, we shall be apt, when we have nothing else to do, to be venting our Activity in *factious* and *turbulent* Zeal, in *seditious* Pratings and Conspiracies, in *backbiting* our Adversaries, and *fetching* and *carrying* scandalous Reports to create Jealousies and Animosities between Neighbour and Neighbour. In a word, if we are of a *sanguine* and *jovial* Dispositions, our idle hours will be so many tempting Opportunities to *Intemperance* and *Wantonness*, *Prophaneness* and *Scurrility*, and all the other Wickednesses of a *lewd* and *dissolute* Conversation. If therefore we mean to be secured from *sinful* Actions, we must allow our selves no leisure from *religious* or *honest* ones, which for the above named Reason, we shall find utterly unpracticable, if we be not *diligent* and *industrious* in some honest Calling.

But whilst Mens Minds are *honestly* imployed, they will not be at leisure to listen to Temptation; and 'twill be difficult for any of those Inducements to Sin, which the Devil and outward Objects do perpetually suggest to us, to obtain Admittance to *speak* with our Thoughts, whilst they are thus taken up with *wiser* and *better* Company. But as soon as we dismiss *these*, we do in effect beckon Temptations to our selves, and *invite* the Devil and the World to *invite* us to be wicked. For, as we say, *Opportunity makes the Thief*, *i. e.* it tempts

tempts him to ſteal; ſo when we give the Devil the Opportunity of an *idle* Hour, we do thereby tempt *him* to tempt *us*, and importunately invite him to *ſteal* away the Treaſure of our Innocence, by putting the *Key* of it into his hand, and giving him a free *Acceſs* to it. And though we ſhould be firmly reſolved not to ſin, yet 'tis impoſſible we ſhould be *ſafe* ſo long as we are at leiſure to be *tempted*; becauſe while we are *at leiſure* we ſhall be very often *diſputing* and *holding* Arguments with the Tempter, who, by his *Querks* and *Sophiſtries*, will many times circumvent ſuch *Novices* as we, before we are aware. But when we are not only *reſolved* againſt him, but are alſo ſo *imployed* as that we are not at leiſure to attend to him, it is paſt his skill to faſten any Temptation upon us. Wherefore if we would be ſecure in the Courſe of our Chriſtian Warfare, we muſt follow St. *Jerome*'s Counſel to his Friend *Ruſticus*, *Semper boni aliquid operis facito, ut Diabolus te ſemper inveniat occupatum*, be always doing one good Work or other, that ſo the Devil may always find thee buſie.

IX. To our *Courſe* and *Progreſs* in the Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould endeavour, ſo far as in us lies, to keep up a conſtant *Chearfulneſs* of *Spirit* in our Religion. It is doubtleſs a great Diſgrace to our Religion to imagine (as too many *ſuperſtitious* Chriſtians do) that it is an Enemy to *Mirth* and *Chearfulneſs*, and a ſevere Exactor of *penſive* Looks and *ſolemn* Faces; that men are never ſerious enough till they are *moped* into Statues, and *cloiſtered* from all Society, but that of their own melancholy Thoughts; That

'tis a Gospel-Duty to *whine* or to be *silent*, and retire themselves from the most innocent *Pleasures* and *Festivities* of Conversation; and, in a word, that all kind of *Mirth* and *facetious* Humour is to be rank'd among those *Idle Words* which our Saviour tells us shall be brought to Judgment. As if Religion were a *Caput mortuum*, a heavy, stark, insipid thing, that had neither *Heat*, nor *Life*, nor *Motion* in it; or were intended for a *Meduſa's* Head to transform Men into Monuments of Stone. By which *false* Conceptions of it, they render it much more burthensome than it is in its own Nature. For to make Religion forbid us any thing that is *humane* and *natural*, is to render it a real *Grievance* unto humane Nature; 'tis to make our *Duty* run a tilt at the Principles of our *Being*, and set our *Conscience* and our *Nature* at Variance with one another. And therefore, since to be *risible* and *sociable*, is as natural to us as to be *reasonable*, to make our *Religion* an Enemy to our *Mirth* and *Conversation*, is to represent it as a tyrannical Invader of the essential *Liberties* and *Properties* of humane Nature. 'Tis true, indeed, though it denies us not the freedom of an *innocent* Humour, nor disallows those little *Plaisances* and inoffensive *Railleries* of Fancy which are sometimes requisite to *sauce* our Conversation, and give it a *quicker* Relish; yet hath it taken care to bound our Merriments with the necessary Precepts of *Sobriety* and *Gravity*, that so by too much whiffling up and down in the little *levities* of Fancy, our Minds may not grow *vain*, and *light* and *trifling*, and be thereby indisposed to *serious* Thoughts and Reflections: But so long as we keep within the

the Bounds of *Sobriety*, and do not sally out into *malicious* or *scurrilous* or *prophane* Jesting, our Religion doth not only *connive* at our Mirth, but *commend* and *approve* it: and so remote is it from *cramping* those Strings and Sinews of the Mind, *Chearfulness* and *Action*, that it *recollects* their scatter'd Vigour, and *winds up* their Slackness to a true Harmony.

For it requires that our *speech should be alway with grace*, Col. iv. 6. *i. e.* as some Expositors understand the Phrase, that it should not be *whining* and *melancholy*, but *sprightly* and *chearful*; it bids us *rejoyce evermore*, 1 Thes. v. 16. and *rejoice in the Lord alway, and again rejoice*, Phil. iv. 4. that is, To endeavour to be chearful in all Conditions, and to bear all Events with a *serene* and *lightsome* Mind. And therefore the Apostle reckons this among the blessed Fruits and Effects of that Divine Spirit which accompanies and animates Christianity, *viz. Joy*, or *Chearfulness*, Gal. v. 22. and this is one of the Particulars in which the same Apostle makes the *Christian* Laws to consist, as they stand opposed to the *Ritual* Laws of the Jews; *the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e.* The Laws of the Christian Church, *is not meat and drink, i. e.* Consists not of Injunctions or Prohibitions of things that are of a *Ritual* or *Indifferent* Nature; *but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. xiv. 17. which three Particulars being opposed to things that are *unnecessary*, must, by the Law of Oppositions, denote things that are *necessary*; and therefore as by *Righteousness* and *Peace*, must be meant *Justice* and *Peaceableness*, so by *Joy in the Holy Ghost*, must be meant *Chearfulness* and *Alacrity* in doing

doing the Will of God; becauſe *Joy* can be in no other Senſe Matter of *Neceſſary* Duty. By all which it is evident, That *Chearfulneſs* of Temper is ſo far from being *diſcountenanced* by our Religion, that 'tis *required* and *injoined* by it, ſo far as 'tis in our Power and Choice. And indeed it highly becomes us, who ſerve ſo good a Maſter, to be *free* and *chearful*, and thereby to expreſs a grateful ſenſe of his Goodneſs, and of thoſe glorious Rewards, which we expect from his inexhauſtible Bounty; but as for a *gloomy* Look and *dejected* Countenance, it better beſeems a Gally-ſlave than a Servant of God. And as *Chearfulneſs* is a Duty that very well *becomes* our State, ſo it is highly *neceſſary* to ſupport and carry us on in our Chriſtian Warfare.

For *Chearfulneſs* is Nature's beſt Friend; it *removes* its Oppreſſions, *enlivens* it Faculties, and keeps its Spirits in a *brisk* and *regular* Motion, and hereby renders it *eaſie* to it ſelf, and *uſeful* and *ſerviceable* to God and Man. It diſpels *Clouds* from the Mind, and *Fears* from the *Heart*, and kindles and cheriſhes in us *brave* and *generous* Affections, and compoſes our Natures into ſuch a *regular* Temper, as is of all others the moſt fit to receive religious Impreſſions, and the Breathings of the Spirit of God. For what the Jews do obſerve of the Spirit of *Prophecy*, is as true of the Spirit of *Holineſs*, that it dwells not with *Sadneſs*, but with *Chearfulneſs*; that being it ſelf of a *calm* and *gentle* Nature, it loves not to reſide with *black* and *melancholy* Paſſions, but requires a *compoſed* and *ſerene* Temper to act upon. And hence *Tertul.* in his *de Spectac. Deus præcepit Spiritum Sanctum*, *utpote*

utpote pro Naturæ suæ bono tenerum & delicatum, Tranquillitate & Lenitate & Quiete & Pace tractare; non Furore, non Bile, non Ira, non Dolore inquietare, i. e. God hath commanded that the Holy Spirit, who is of a tender and delicate *Nature*, should be entertained by us with Tranquility and Mildness, with Quietness and Peace, and that we should take care not to disturb him with Fury and Choler, or with Anger and Grief. And indeed Melancholy naturally infests the Holy Spirit, and disturbs him in all his operations; it overwhelms the Fancy with *black* Reeks and Vapours, and thereby *clouds* and *darkens* the Understanding, and *intercepts* the Holy Spirit's Illuminations; and, like red coloured Glass before the eye, causes the most *lovely* and *attractive* Objects to look *bloudy* and *terrible*. It distracts the Thoughts, and renders them *wild*, *roving* and *incoherent*; and thereby utterly *indispoſes* them to Prayer and Consideration, and renders them *deaf* and *unattentive* to all good Motions and Inspirations. It *freezes* up the Heart with *despairing* Fears and Despondencies, and represents *easie* things as *difficult* to us, and *difficult* as *impossible*, and thereby *discouroges* us from all those vertuous Attempts, to which the blessed Spirit doth so importunately *excite* and *provoke* us. In a word, it naturally *benumbs* and *stupifies* the Souls, *obstructs* its Motions, and makes it *listless* and *unactive*, and so, by indispoſing it to *co-operate* with the Holy Spirit, renders it an *incapable* Subject of his Divine Grace and Influence. Thus Melancholy, you see, by its *sullen* and *malevolent* Aspects, doth obstinately *resist* and *counter-influence* the Holy Spirit, without whose Aid and Assistance

stance we can never hope to prosper in our Spiritual Warfare.

Wherefore, if we mean to succeed in this great Affair, it concerns us to use all honest and innocent means to dispel this *black* and *mischievous* Humour, and to beget and maintain in our Minds a constant *Serenity* and *Chearfulness* of Temper; and when ever our Spirits begin to *droop* and *languish*, to betake our selves to such *natural* Remedies, such *harmless* Diversions, Refreshments and Recreations, as are fit and proper to *raise* them up again; and not to suffer them to *sink* into a Bog of Melancholy Humours, whilst 'tis in our Power by any honest Art or Invention to *support* them. Which, if we can but effect, will be of vast Advantage to us in the whole Course of our Religion. For in an even *Chearfulness* of Temper, our Spirits will be always *lively*, *strong*, and *active*, and fit for the *best* and *noblest* Operations; they will give *Light* to our Understandings, *Courage* to our Hearts, and *Wings* to our Affections; so that we shall be able more *clearly* to discern Divine and Heavenly things, more *resolutely* to practise, and more *vehemently* to aspire after them; and our Considerations will be more *fixt*, our Devotions more *intent*, and all our spiritual Endeavours more *active* and *vivacious*. For a *chearful* Temper will represent every thing *chearfully* to us; 'twill represent God so *lovely*, Religion so *attractive*, the Rewards of it so *immense*, and the Difficulties of it so *inconsiderable*, and thereby inspire us with so much *Life* and *Courage*, as that none of all those spiritual Enemies, we war and contend against, will be able to withstand our Resolution.

X. To

X. To our Courſe and Progreſs in this our Spiritual Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we maintain in our Minds a conſtant *Senſe* and *Expectation* of Heaven; that ſince things of the other World are *future* and *inviſible*, and conſequently leſs apt to *touch* and *affect* us than theſe worldly things which are continually *preſſing* upon our Senſes, we ſhould, as oft as we have Opportunity, withdraw our Thoughts from theſe *ſenſible* Objects, and retire into the *immaterial* World, and there entertain our ſelves with the cloſe *View* and *Contemplation* of the Joys and Glories it abounds with. For we are a ſort of Beings, that being compounded of *Fleſh* and *Spirit*, are by theſe *oppoſite* Principles of our Nature ally'd to two *oppoſite* Worlds, and placed in the middle between *Heaven* and *Earth* as the common Centre wherein thoſe diſtant Regions meet. By our *ſpiritual* Nature we hold Communion with the *ſpiritual* World, and by our *corporeal* with this *earthly* and *ſenſible* one; whoſe Objects being always *preſent* with us, and *ſtriking* as they do immediately upon our Senſes, we lie much more bare and open to them, than to thoſe of the Spiritual World. So that, unleſs we now and then *withdraw* our ſelves from theſe ſenſible things, which hang like the Cloud between, we can never have a free *Proſpect* into that clear Heaven above them. And hence it becomes neceſſary that we ſhould now and then make a ſolemn *Retirement* of our Thoughts from *earthly* Objects and Enjoyments, that ſo we may approach near enough to Heaven to *touch* and *feel* the Joys and Pleaſures of it, which, while we *tranſiently* behold in this Croud of worldly Objects, is placed at ſuch

a diſtance from us, that it looks like a *thin, blue* Landskip, next to nothing; and hath not apparent Reality enough in it to raiſe our Deſires and Expectations.

And hence we are commanded to *ſet our Affections upon*, or as it is in the Original, *to mind thoſe things that are above*, Col. iii. 2. and that by theſe *things above*, he means the Enjoyments of Heaven, it's plain from *ver.* 1. where he expreſly tells us, that by the *above*, in which theſe things are, he means Heaven, *where Chriſt ſits at the right hand of God.* So that the Senſe of the Precept is this, that we ſhould *fix* in our Minds ſuch *lively* Repreſentations of the Glory and Reality of the Celeſtial State, as may raiſe in our Hearts a *longing* Deſire and *earneſt* Expectation of being made Partakers of it. Which *Hope* and *Expectation* he elſewhere enjoins us to *put on for an helmet, i. e.* for a neceſſary Piece of *defenſive* Armour againſt the Difficulties and Diſcouragements of our Chriſtian Warfare, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 8. and *Heb.* vi. 19. *This hope which enters into that within the veil, i. e.* into Heaven, is ſaid to be *the Anchor of the ſoul both ſure and ſtedfaſt, i. e.* 'Tis that which *ſtays* and *ſecures* the Soul in the midſt of thoſe many *Storms* of Temptation it meets withal in its *Voyage* to Heaven; and it being ſo, we are bid to *look to* and imitate our Bleſſed Lord, *who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now ſat down at the right of God*, Heb. 12. 2. The meaning of all which is, that we ſhould earneſtly indeavour to *fix* in our minds a *vigorous* Senſe and Expectation of that immortal Happineſs with which God hath promiſed to crown all that come

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off Conquerours from this Spiritual Warfare; that all along as we *march* we should keep Heaven in our *Eye*, and *incourage* our selves with the *Hope* of it to *charge through* all those Difficulties and Temptations, that oppose us in the way; in a word, that we should frequently *awaken* in our minds the glorious *Thoughts* of a blessed Immortality, and possess our selves with a lively *Expectation* of injoying it, if we *hold out* to the End.

Which is a Duty of a vast Consequence to us in the *Course* of our Spiritual Warfare. For Heaven being the *End* and *Reward* of our Warfare, must needs be the grand *Encouragement* thereunto; and consequently if once we *lose Sight* of Heaven, and suffer *earthly* things to *Interpose* and *eclipse* the Glory and Reality of it, our Courage will never be able to *bear up* against those manifold Temptations that do continually assault us. But whilst we continue under a *lively Sense* of that blessed Recompence of Reward, *that* will so *spirit* and *invigorate* our Resolution, that nothing will be able to *withstand* it; and all the *Terrors* and *Allurements* that Sin can propose, will be forced to *fly* before it, and to retreat like so many impotent Waves that dash against a Rock of Adamant. For while we are under a lively Sense and Expectance of the Happiness above, we live as it were in the *Midway* between Heaven and Earth, where we have an open Prospect of the Glories of *both*, and do plainly see how *faint* and *dim* these *below* are in comparison with those *above*; how they are forced to *sneak* and *dis-appear* in the Presence of those eternal *Splendors*, and to *shrowd* their *vanquisht* Beauties,

Beauties, as the Stars do when the Sun appears. And whilst we *interchangeably* turn our Eyes from one to t'other how fruitlesly do the *Pleasures*, *Profits*, and *Honours* below, importune us to abandon the *Joys* and *Glories* above, and with what Indignation do we listen to the Proposals of such a *senseless* and *ridiculous* Exchange? And, could we but always keep our selves at this stand, we should be so *fortified* with the Sight of those happy Regions *above*, that no Temptation from *below* would ever be able to *approach* us; and the Sense that we are going on to that blessed State would carry us through all the *weary* Stages of our Duty, with an *indefatigable* Vigour. For what may a Man not do with Heaven in his *Eye*, with that *potent*, I had almost said *Omnipotent*, Encouragement before him? To *pull out* a right Eye, to *cut off* a right Hand, to *tear* a darling Lust from his Heart, even when 'tis *wrapt* about it, and *twisted* with its Strings, what an *easie* Atchievement is it to a Man that hath a Heaven of immortal Glories in his *View?* The Hope of which is enough to recommend even *Racks* and *Torments*, and turn the Flames of Martyrdom into a Bed of Roses. For 'twas this blessed Prospect that inabled the good old *Martyrs* to *triumph* so gloriously as they did in the midst of their Sufferings; they knew that a few Moments would put an End to their Miseries, and that when once they had *weather'd* those short *storms*, they should arrive at a most blessed *Harbour*, and be crowned at their *Landing*; and that from thence they should look back with infinite Joy and Delight upon the dangerous *Sea* they had escaped, and for ever bless those *Storms* and *Winds* that

that drave them to that happy *Port*, for as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, *they sought a heavenly Country*, Heb. xi. 14, 16.

XI. And lastly, To the successful *Progress* of our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we should live in the *frequent* use of the *publick Ordinances* and *Institutions* of our Religion; namely, in the religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, and in frequent *Communion* with one another in the *Holy Sacrament*, both which are of great Use to us in the *Course* and *Progress* of our spiritual Warfare. For as for the *Lord's Day*, it is *instituted*, and ever since the Apostle's Time hath been *observed* in the Christian Church, as a Day of *publick* Worship and *weekly* Thanksgiving for our Saviour's *Resurrection*, in which the great Work of our Redemption was *consummated*. And certainly it must needs be of vast Advantage to be *one* day in *seven* sequestred from the World, and imployed in *divine* Offices, in solemn *Prayers*, *Praises*, and *Thanksgivings*, and to be obliged to *assist* and *edifie* one another by the mutual *Example* and *Union* of our Devotions; to hear the Duties of our Religion *explained*, the Sins against it *reprehended*, and the Doctrines of it *unfolded* and *reduced* to plain and easie Principles of Practice; what a mighty advantage might we reap from all these blessed *Ministries*, if we would but attend to them with that *Concern* and *Seriousness* which the matter of them *requires* and *deserves*? Especially if when the *publick* Offices are over, we would not *let loose* our selves all the rest of the Day, as we too frequently do, to our *secular* Cares and Diversions, and thereby *choak* those good Instructions we have

heard, and *ſtifle* thoſe devout and pious Affections which have been raiſed and excited in us; but inſtead of ſo doing, we would devote at leaſt ſome good Portion of it to the *Inſtruction* of our Families, and to the *private* Exerciſe of our Religion, to *Meditation* and *Prayer*, to the *Examination* of our ſelves concerning our *paſt* Behaviour, and the *reinforcing* our Reſolution to behave our ſelves better for the future; if, I ſay, we would thus ſpend our *Lord's Day*, we ſhould doubtleſs find our ſelves *better* men for it all the *Week* after; we ſhould go into the World again with much *better* Affections, and *ſtronger* Reſolutions, with our Graces more *vigorous*, and our bad Inclinations more *reduced* and *tamed*, and whereas the Jews were to gather *Manna* enough on their *ſixth* Day, to feed their *Bodies* on the enſuing *Sabbath*, we ſhould gather *Manna* enough upon our *Sabbath*, to feed and ſtrengthen our *Souls* all the *ſix days* after.

But to this we muſt alſo add frequent *Communions* with one another in the *Holy Sacrament*, which is an Ordinance *inſtituted* on purpoſe by our bleſſed Saviour, for the *improving* and *furthering* us in our Chriſtian Warfare. For beſides that herein we have one of the moſt *puiſſant* Arguments againſt Sin repreſented by *viſible* Signs to our Senſe, *viz.* The bloudy *Sacrifice* of our bleſſed Lord to *expiate* and make *Atonement* for it; beſides that thoſe *bleeding* Wounds of his which are here repreſented by the *breaking* of the *Bread*, and *pouring out of the Wine*, do proclaim our Sins his *Aſſaſſines* and *Murderers*, the thought of which, if we had any ingenuity in us, were enough to

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incense in us the most *implacable* Indignation against them; besides that, his sufferings for our Sins, of which this sacred *Solemnity* is a *lively* Picture, do horribly *remonstrate* God's *Displeasure* against them, who would not be induced to pardon them upon any *meaner* Expiation than the Bloud of his Son, than which *Hell* it self is not a more *dreadful* Argument to *scare* and *terrifie* us from them; in a word, besides that, his so freely *submitting* and *offering* up himself to be a *Propitiation* for us, of which this Holy Festival is a solemn *Commemoration*, is an expression of *Kindness* sufficient to *captivate* the most *ungrateful* Souls, and *extort* Obedience from them; besides all this, I say, as it is a *Feast* upon the *Sacrifice* of his Body and Bloud, it is a Federal Rite, whereby God and we, by *feasting* together, do, according to the ancient Customs both of *Jews* and *Heathens*, mutually *oblige* our selves to one another; whereby God, by *giving* us the *mystical* Bread and Wine, and we by *receiving* them, do mutually *ingage* our selves to one another upon those sacred Pledges of Christ's Body and Bloud, that we will *faithfully* perform each other's Part of that everlasting *Covenant* which was purchased by him. And what can be a greater *Restraint* to us when we are Sollicited to any Sin, than the sense of being under such a dreadful *Vow* and *Obligation*? With what face *dare* we listen to any Temptation to Evil, when we remember how lately we solemnly *ingaged* our selves to the contrary, and took the *Sacrament* upon it? And verily I doubt 'tis *this* that lies at the bottom of that seeming *modest* pretence of *Unworthiness* which Men are wont to urge in Excuse for their

Neglect of the Sacrament; namely, That they *love* their Lusts, and cannot resolve to *part* with them, and therefore are *afraid* to make such a solemn *Abjaration* of them, as the eating and drinking the consecrated Elements implies. And I confess, if *this* be their Reason, they are *unworthy* indeed, the more *shame* for them, but 'tis such an *Unworthiness* as is so far from *excusing*, that it only *aggravates* their neglect. For, for any Man to plead that he *dares* not receive the Sacrament because he is resolved to *sin on*, is to make that which is his *Fault*, his *Apology*, and to excuse *one* Sin with *another*. Wherefore if we are heartily *resolved* by the Grace of God to *reform* and *amend*, let us abstain no longer from this great Federal Rite, upon Pretence of *Unworthiness*. For 'tis by the use of *this*, among *other* Means, that we are to *improve* and grow more and more *worthy*. For the very *Repetition* of our Resolution, as I have shewed above, is a proper Means of *strengthening* and *confirming* it; and certainly it must needs be much more so, when 'tis *renewed* and *repeated* with the Solemnity of a Sacrament. And therefore it is worth observing, how much Care our Lord hath taken, in the very constitution of our Religion, to oblige us to a *constant*, *solemn* Repetition of our good Resolutions. For at our first entrance into *Covenant* with him, we are to be *baptized*, in which Solemnity we do openly *renounce* the Devil and all his Works, and religiously *devote* our selves to his Service. But because we are apt to *forget* this our Baptismal *Vow*, and the *Matter* of it is *continually* to be performed, and more than *one* World depends upon it, therefore he hath thought fit not to

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trust wholly to this *first* Engagement, but hath so methodized our Religion, as that we are ever and anon obliged to give him *new* Security. For which End, he hath instituted this *other* Sacrament, which is not like that of *Baptism*, to be received by us *once for all*, but to be often *reiterated* and *repeated*, that so upon the frequent *Returns* of it, we might still be obliged to *repeat* over our old Vows of Obedience. For he hath not only injoyned us that we should *do this in remembrance of him*, Luxe xxii. 19. *i. e.* That we should celebrate this sacred Festival in the Memory of his Passion; but by thus doing the Apostle tells us we are to *continue* the Memorial of it to the end of the World, or *to shew his death till he comes*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. And that this doth not, like the Precept of *Baptism*, oblige us for *once* only and no more, is evident from the foregoing words of this last recited Text, *as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup*, which plainly shews, that these Sacramental Elements are to be *more* than *once* received by us. 'Tis true, how *often* 'tis to be done neither Christ nor his Apostles have any where *defined*, but if we consult *Primitive Example* (which in the Absence of *express* Precept is the *best* Rule to determine our selves by) we shall find that it was very *frequently* received. For from some Passages in the Acts of the Apostles, it seems *probable* that Christians did then cammunicate *every Day*, as particularly *Acts* ii. 46. where they are said *to continue daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread, κατ' οἶκον, in the house*, that is, as it seems *probable*, in some upper room of the Temple; though *perhaps* this *daily* may referr only to the

Lord's Day, agreeably to that, *Acts* xx. 7. *On the first day of the week when the Disciples came together to break bread*, Paul *preached unto them*. But it's *certain* that whensoever they assembled to the *publick* Worship, they closed it with the *Lord's Supper*; which they did for a great while in the *Western* Churches *every day* in the Week, and in the *Eastern*, as S. *Basil* tells us, Epist. 289. *four times* a Week, besides *Festivals*. So that allowing for our *Declensions* from the *Primitive* Zeal and Devotion, one would think that to communicate now *once* in *four* Weeks should be a very *moderate* Proportion. But as for those that *wholly* neglect this sacred Institution, for my own part I see not how they can *excuse* themselves from being guilty of a wilful *Rebellion* against their Saviour, or with what Confidence they can expect either that he should *assist* them with his *Grace* on the *Way*, or *crown* them with his *Salvation* in the End, when they so *perversly* turn their backs upon an Ordinance which he hath solemnly instituted for a *Conveyance* of the *one*, and a *Seal* of the *other*.

But would we take that Care that becomes us, to *prepare* our selves for, and *frequent* this holy Institution, there is no doubt but we should find it of mighty Advantage to us in the whole *Course* of our Religion. For till we are arrived to a *confirmed* State of Good, our holy Fervours will be very apt to *cool*, our good Purposes to *slacken* and *unwind*, and our vertuous Endeavours to *languish* and *tire*; and therefore unless we take care frequently to *revive* our Religion with this spiritual *Repast* and *Restorative*, and still to add *new* Fewel to it as the Flame decays, it will quickly *pine away* and

and *expire*. But if upon the *ſolemn* Returns of this ſacred Feſtival, we would *conſtantly* come with due Preparation to our Maſter's Table, and here *renew* our Vows, *re-invigorate* our Reſolutions, *repair* our Decays, and put our *ſluggiſh* Graces into a new *Fermentation*, we ſhould find our Religion not only *live*, but *thrive*, and be ſtill acquiring *new* Degrees of Strength and Activity. But becauſe this Argument hath been already ſo fully handled in our Practical Treatiſes, particularly by the Reverend Dr. *Patrick* in his *Menſa Myſtica* and *Chriſtian Sacrifice*, I ſhall referr the Reader thither for the farther Conſideration of it.

And thus, with all the Brevity I could, I have indeavoured to give an Account of thoſe *Duties* which are neceſſary in the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our *Chriſtian Warfare*.

SECT. IV.

Containing certain Motives *to animate men againſt the* Difficulty *of theſe* Duties *which appertain to the* Courſe *of our* Chriſtian Warfare.

How *neceſſary* and *uſeful* to us thoſe aforenamed Duties are, in the *Courſe* of our Chriſtian Warfare, hath been ſufficiently ſhewn. So that now there is nothing that our *Sloth* and *Unwillingneſs* can object againſt them, but only this, that they are very *difficult*, and do require more of our *Time* and *Care* and *Pains*, than we can conveniently ſpare from our other neceſſary Occaſions; that the Practice of them is ſo *unpleaſant* and

severe, and attended with so much *Cumber* and *Trouble*, that we very much doubt we shall never be able to *go through* with them. And therefore to remove this Objection out of men's way, and to excite them to the Practice of these necessary Duties, I shall for a Conclusion of this Argument add, to what hath been said of it, these following *Considerations*,

1. That whatsoever *Difficulty* there is in the Practice of them, we may *thank our selves* for it.

2. That in the *Course* of our *Sin* there is a great deal of *Difficulty*, as well as in our Warfare *against* it.

3. That how *difficult* soever this Warfare may be, it must be *indured*, or that which is a great deal *worse*.

4. That though it be *difficult*, yet there is nothing in it but what the Grace of God will render *possible* to us, if we be not *wanting* to our selves.

5. That the Practice of these Duties is not so *difficult*, but that it is fairly consistent with all our other necessary *Occasions* and *Diversions*.

6. That the *Difficulty* is such as will certainly *abate* and *wear off* by Degrees, if we *constantly* practise them.

7. That with the *difficulty* of them there is a world of present *Peace* and *Satisfaction* intermingled.

8. That their *Difficulty* is abundantly *compensated* by the final *Reward* of them.

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I. Consider, That whatsoever *Difficulty* there is in the Practice of them, we may *thank our selves* for it. For if we had betaken our selves to the Practice of Religion as soon as we were *capable* of it, before we had *entered* our selves into sinful Courses, and had *therein* contracted sinful Habits and Inclinations, we might have *prevented* those Difficulties which we now *complain of*. For our Religion was made *for* and adapted *to* our Nature, and would have sweetly *accorded* with all its Affections and Propensions, had we not *vitiated* them by our own wilful Sin, and clapt a *preternatural* Bias upon them. But though the Light be *naturally* congruous to the Eye, yet if through a Distillation of ill Humours into it the Eye grow *sore* and *weak*, there is nothing more *grievous* and *offensive* to it. And so it is with Religion, which to the *pure* and *uncontaminated* Nature of a Man, is the most *grateful* and *agreeable* thing in the World; but if by our own ill Government, we *disease* our Nature, and *deprave* its Primitive Constitution, it is no wonder that Religion which was so well *proportioned* to it in its *Purity*, should sit *hard* and *uneasie* upon it, in its *Apostasie* and Corruption. For to a Man that is in a *Feaver*, every thing is *bitter*, even Hony, which when he is *well*, is exceeding *sweet* and *grateful*; but the *Bitterness* which he tastes is not in the *Hony*, but in the *Gall* which overflows his own Palate; and so to a Nature that is *diseased* with any unnatural Lust, that which is most *congruous* to *it self*, will be most *nauseous* to its *Disease*; and those Duties which in its *Health* 'twould have imbraced with the greatest *Pleasure*, will in its *Sickness* be

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the greateſt *Burthen* and *Oppreſſion* to it. And when we have ſpoiled the *Purity* of our Conſtitution, and are *degenerated* from the *humane* Nature into the *brutal* or *diabolical*, it is no great wonder that the Religion of a *Man* ſhould be a Burthen to the Nature of a *Beaſt* or a *Devil*. So that whatſoever *Difficulties* there are in Religion, they ariſe not out of the Nature of the *things* it requires, but out of the perverſe *Indiſpoſitions* of our Natures to them; and theſe were for the moſt part contracted by *our ſelves*; ſo that inſtead of *complaining* of the Difficulty, we ought to *ſtrive* and *contend* the more earneſtly againſt it, becauſe we may *thank our ſelves* for it. When a Man hath plaid the Fool, and ſet his Houſe *on Fire*, the Senſe of his own Folly ought to make him more induſtrious to *extinguiſh* it; but if inſtead of ſo doing, he ſhould ſit with his Hands in his Boſom, and complain of the Miſchief, and the Difficulty of *ſtopping* it, what would Folks ſay of him? Miſchievous Creature, doth it become thee to ſit here *idly* complaining of the effect of thy own Villany, whilſt 'tis yet in thy Power, wouldſt thou but *beſtir* thy ſelf, to *quench* the Flame, and prevent the *ſpreading* of it? For ſhame get up, and do thy utmoſt Endeavour to *repair* thy *own* Act, and to extinguiſh this ſpreading Miſchief of which thou art the *Author*. Since therefore we have been ſo obſtinately fooliſh as to *ſet fire* to our own Souls, and *kindle* in them by our vicious Courſes, ſuch deſtructive *Flames* of unnatural Luſt, how monſtrouſly *ridiculous* is it, whilſt 'tis yet in our Power to extinguiſh them, to ſit *whining* and *complaining* of the Difficulty of it, and in the mean

mean time permit them to *rage* and *burn on* without Interruption? O miſerable Men, if they are ſo *hard* to be quenched, who may ye *thank* for it? Was it not you that kindled them, and do you ſit idly *complaining* of your own Act, when you ſhould be the more induſtrious to *repair* the Miſchief of it, becauſe it is *your own.* For ſhame *ariſe* and *beſtir* your ſelves, and ſince you are conſcious that the *Difficulties* of your Religion are of your own *creating*, and that thoſe Luſts which *indiſpoſe* ye to it are the products of your own *Actions*, let this excite you to a more *vigorous* Endeavour to *ſubdue* and *conquer* them.

II. Conſider that in the *Courſe* of your *Sins* there is a great deal of *Difficulty*, as well as in your Warfare *againſt* them. For I dare appeal to your own Experience, whether you have not found a great deal of *Hardſhip* in Wickedneſs, eſpecially while you were *educating* and *training up* your Natures to it? Did not your Nature oftentimes *recoil* and *ſtart* and *boggle* at your vicious Actions; and were you not fain ſometimes to *curb*, and ſometimes to *ſpur* it, to commit many *Outrages* and *Violences* upon it, *whilſt* you were *backing* and *managing* it, before you could reduce it to a *Through pace* in Iniquity; How often have you put your *modeſt* Nature to the *Bluſh*, at the ſenſe of a *filthy* and *uncomely* Action, whilſt your wicked Will hath been dragging it along like a *timorous* Virgin to an Adulterer's Bed; and what terrible *Shrieks* have your Conſciences many times given in the midſt of your ſinful Commiſſions, when you were acting the firſt *Rapes* upon your Innocence? How many a *penſive* Mood hath the *Review* of your

your ſinful Pleaſures coſt ye, and what *Swarms* of Horrour and dreadful Expectation hath the *Reflection* on your paſt Guilts raiſed in your Minds? And then with what exceſſive *Difficulty* have you been fain to practiſe ſome Vices, only to get an *Habit* of practiſing them more *eaſily*; How often have you been forced to *ſwallow* Sickneſs, to drink dead *Palſies* and foaming *Epilepſies*, to render your Intemperances *familiar* to you, and in what *Qualms*, and *fainting* ſweats, and *ſottiſh* Confuſions have you many times awaked; before ever you could Connaturalize your *midnight* Revels to your Temper? And when with ſo much *Labour* and *Violence*, you have pretty well *trained* and *exerciſed* your ſelves in this helliſh Warfare, and thereby rendred it *natural* and *habitual* to you, to how many Inconveniences hath it daily *expoſed* you, and what *baſe* and *unmanly* Shifts hath it put you upon, to *extricate* your ſelves out of thoſe *Difficulties* wherein it hath *involved* you? What violent *Paſſions* and *Perturbations* doth it raiſe in your Minds, and into what *wild* Tumults of Action doth it frequently *hurry* you? In a word, how doth it *perplex* and *intrigue* the whole Courſe of your Lives, and *intangle* ye in a Labyrinth of *Knaviſh* Tricks and Colluſions; ſo that many times you are at your *Wits end*, and know not which way to *turn* your ſelves? All *theſe* Difficulties, and a great many *more*, which I cannot preſently think of, you muſt have contended with in a *ſinful* Courſe of Action, if you have made any conſiderable Experiment of it.

And do you complain of the *Difficulty* of perſevering in Religion; *you* that have ſo *courageouſly* perſevered

perſevered in a *worſe* Way againſt Difficulties that are as *great*, all things conſidered, if not *greater*; *you* that have hitherto ſinn'd on ſo *induſtriouſly*, that have broke through ſo many ſtrong *Barricadoes* to come at and enjoy your Luſts, are *you* not aſhamed to *ſtart* and *boggle* as you do, at the Difficulties of Virtue and Religion? Look but how the *induſtrious* Sinner *upbraids* you? His way *leads* directly to *Ruine*, and he *knows* it, and yet he *preſſes on* couragiouſly, as if he were ambitious to be a *Heroe* in iniquity, and *charges* through all the *modeſty* of Humane Nature, through all his native *ſenſe* of a God and a Divine Vengeance; he *marches* forward through *Infamy* and *Diſeaſes*, through *Dangers* and a world of *Inconveniences*, and offers a kind of *Violence* to *Hell*, as if he meant to *force* open its brazen Portal, and enter *headlong* into it, before 'tis ready to receive him, whilſt you, in the mean time, like a Company of *Creſt-faln* Creatures, ſtand *ſhivering* at a few trifling Difficulties in your Way, though you have *Heaven* for your *End*, and a *Crown* of Glory for your Reward.

In ſhort therefore, This is the True State of your Caſe; chuſe which ſide you pleaſe, whether to march under *Chriſt*'s, or the Devil's Banner; you muſt expect before-hand to encounter *ſome* Difficulties, yea, and perhaps as great on the *one* ſide as on the *other*; and if ſo, then you have little elſe to do but to compare their *Ends*, and to conſider which of the two is moſt *eligible*, a Crown of *Glory*, or Eternal *Torment*.

III. Conſider that how *Difficult* ſoever this your Spiritual Warfare may be, it muſt be *indured*,

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or that which is much more *intolerable.* I confess were it not absolutely *necessary*, we might, with some colour of Reason, urge the *Difficulty* of it, to *excuse* our selves from *undertaking* and *prosecuting* it; but when our Case is such, as that we must either *conquer* or *perish*, *swim* through, or *sink* under the difficulties we *complain* of, the matter will admit of no further *Debate*, but we must e'en resolve of the *two* Evils to *chuse* that which is the *least*. When the Ship hath *sprung* a Leak, 'tis a madness for the Mariners to sit still and complain of the *Pains* and *Labour* of Pumping; for in the Extremity they are in, there is no more to be said, they must *pump* or *perish*; and it is not to be debated, where there is so vast an *Inequality* between the Objects of their Choice, which of the *two* they were best to fix upon; whether to *take pains* for the present to *secure* the Ship, or to *sit still* and suffer themselves to be *swallowed up* in the Ocean. And thus it is in the Case before us; our Soul hath sprung a Leak, and let into its *Holds* those *Stygian* Waters of *Sensual* and *Diabolical* Lust, which will *sink* us down to *Hell*, if they be not pump'd out again; and this is not to be done without a great deal of Labour and Difficulty. But what then; were we not better labour for a *while* than perish *for ever?* Do we talk of *Labour* when our Souls are *at stake*, and our immortal Life is upon the Brink of an everlasting *well* or *ill* being? In other Cases we never think much to endure a *present* Inconvenience for the prevention of a future Mischief; we are content to *fast*, when we perceive it's necessary to *obviate* an approaching *Feaver*, to be *cupp'd* and *scarrified* with all the Artifice of

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Pain to *prevent* or *remove* a dangerous Diſeaſe; and in all other Caſes are generally willing to prolong our Torment that we may be the longer a dying; except where the *Preſcription* is *Vertue*, and the *Death* preſcribed againſt is *eternal*; though *this* be the moſt formidable Miſchief of all, as being the utmoſt *Conſummation* of humane Miſery, and compared with which all the *Labours* and *Difficulties* of Religion have not the Proportion of a gentle *Flea biting* to the acuteſt Torments of the *Rack* or *Stone*. For I beſeech you to conſider, Will it not be eaſier for you to indure the *ſhort* Agonies of a bitter Repentance, than the horrid Deſpair of a damned Ghoſt for ever; to thwart a *fooliſh* and *unreaſonable* Luſt, than to lie *roaring* to Eternity upon the *Rack* of a guilty Conſcience? Is there any proportion between your *abſtaining* from the Pleaſures of Sin, that are but for a *moment*, and your being *excluded* from Heaven and all Hope of Happineſs *for ever*? Alas! if it be ſo *difficult* to you to *contend* with an evil Habit, to *ſtruggle* with a ſtiff and obſtinate Inclination, how difficult will it be to *dwell with everlaſting burnings*, and ſuffer the dire Effects of an *unappeaſable* Vengeance to Eternity? Wherefore ſince we are under an abſolute neceſſity of indu-ring the *one* or th' *other*, in the Name of God let us act like Men, and of the *two* Evils chuſe that which is moſt *tolerable*.

IV. Conſider, That though it be *difficult*, yet there is nothing in it but what the Grace of God will render *poſſible* to us, if we be not *wanting* to our ſelves. I confeſs the *Neceſſity* of it would be no Argument to ingage us to undertake it, were

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it not a *poſſible* Undertaking; yea, and readily acknowledge, that it very far exceeds *our* poor Poſſibility *ſingly* and *nakedly* conſidered. So that if we were left to *ſtruggle* with the Difficulty of it in our own ſingle Strength, we might juſtly *deſpair* of Succeſs, and ſo tamely *lie down* and *yield* our ſelves *foil'd* and *defeated*. But God be praiſed this is not our Caſe; for though when we caſt our Eyes upon the many violent Inclinations to evil that are *within* us, and upon the *numberleſs* Temptations to evil that are *about us*; when we ſeriouſly reflect upon the *Weakneſs* of our Reaſon, and the *Strength* of our *Luſt*, and the *Number* and *Nearneſs* and *Prevalency* of thoſe Objects from without, that are continually *preſſing upon* and *aſſaulting* our good Reſolutions; though, I ſay, when we reflect upon all this, we are ready to cry out as *Eliſha*'s Servant did when he beheld the City compaſſed with Horſes and with Chariots, *Alas, Maſter, how ſhall we do?* How ſhall we be able to withſtand all this mighty Army of Enemies? Yet if we turn our Eyes from our *own* Weakneſs, and our *Enemies* Strength, to thoſe gracious Promiſes of *Aſſiſtance*, which the Father of Mercies hath made to us, we ſhall quickly be able to anſwer *our ſelves*, as *Eliſha* did *him*, *Fear not*, O my Soul, *for they that are with us are more*, and more powerful, *than they that are againſt us*. For we have with us not only the *outward* Arguments of Religion, which are of Infinite *more* Force than any *outward* Inducement to Vice whatſoever; we have with us not only the holy *Angels* of God, who are as *willing*, and more *able* to *direct* and *ſtrengthen* us, than all the infernal *Furies* to

to *insnare* and *captivate* us; but we have with us also the Almighty Spirit of God, who by the *Oeconomy* of Heaven, and the *Promise* of our Lord, is obliged to *minister* to us in all our Necessities, and to *aid* and *assist* us against all those Difficulties which would be otherwise *too hard* for us, if we were left to *our selves*. So that if we do but hold true to our own Interest, and take care that we do not drive him away from us, by siding wilfully with our own Enemies against him, we *shall* not, no, we *cannot* miscarry; unless (which is *impossible*) some such Temptation should befal us, as neither *we* nor *he* can resist and cope with. For till by our wilful Sin we have forfeited our Title to the promise of his Assistance, we are as sure of *his* Help in all things that are necessary, as we can be of our *own* Endeavour; and 'tis not more in our power to do what we *can* by the Strength of our own *Faculties*, than 'tis to ingage him to *enable* us to do what we *cannot* without his Aid and *Assistance*. For by faithfully *indeavouring* to persevere in well-doing, we intitle our selves to all the necessary Assistance of his Grace, and so long as this *Title* continues, we are Masters not only of our *own* Strength but of *his* too, and can do not only whatsoever is within our *own* Power *without* him, but also whatsoever is in *his* Power concurring *with ours*.

So that though our *Warfare* be *difficult*, it cannot be *impossible*, unless *we* will have it so. For to be sure there is nothing in it that can be too hard for *God*'s Grace *Co-operating* with the Powers of *our* Nature; and therefore there can be nothing in it *too* hard for *us*, whilst 'tis in our Power

to *ſecure* our ſelves of *that* his gracious Co-operation.

Wherefore let us ſtand *boggling* no longer at the Difficulty of our Progreſs in Religion, ſince God be praiſed, there is nothing required of us beyond what we are *able*; do you but *your* Part which is only what you can, and then doubt not but God will do his; put forth but your *honeſt, hearty* Endeavour, and earneſtly *implore* his Aid and Aſſiſtance, and if *then* you miſcarry, let Heaven anſwer for it. But if upon a Pretence that your Work is too *difficult*, and your Enemies too *mighty* for you, you lay down your Arms, and reſolve to contend with them no longer, let Heaven and Earth judge between God and you, which is to be charged with your ruine; God, that ſo graciouſly *offered* you his Help, that ſtretched out his Hand to *raiſe* ye up, tendered you his Spirit to *guard* and *conduct* ye through all Oppoſitions to eternal happineſs, or you, that would not be *perſuaded* to do any thing for your ſelves, but rather choſe to *periſh* with *Eaſe*, than take any *pains* to be *ſaved*.

V. Conſider that the Practice of theſe Duties is not ſo *difficult*, but that it is fairly conſiſtent with all your other neceſſary *Occaſions*. When men are told how many Duties are neceſſary to their ſucceſsful *Progreſs* in Religion, what *Patience* and *Conſtancy*, what frequent *Examinations* and *Trials* of themſelves, what lively *Thoughts* and *Expectations* of Heaven, *&c.* they are apt to conclude, that if they ſhould ingage to do *all* this, they muſt reſolve to do nothing *elſe*, but even ſhake hands with all their *ſecular* Buſineſs and

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Diverſions, and *Cloiſter* up themſelves from all other Affairs. Which is a very great Miſtake, proceeding either from their not *conſidering*, or not *underſtanding* the Nature of theſe Religious Exerciſes, the greateſt part of which are ſuch as are to be wholly tranſacted in the Mind, whoſe Motions and Operations are much more *nimble* and *expedite* than thoſe of the Body, and ſo may be very well *intermixt* with our *ſecular* Employments, without any *Lett* or *Hindrance* to them. For what great time is there required for a Man now and then to revolve a few *wiſe* and *uſeful* Thoughts in his Mind, to *conſider* the Nature of an Action when it *occurs*, and *reflect* upon an Error when it's *paſt* and hath *eſcaped* him? I can conſider a Temptation when it's *approaching* me, and with a Thought or two of Heaven or Hell, *arm* my Reſolution againſt it in the twinkling of an eye; I can look up to Heaven with an eye of earneſt *Expectance*, and ſend my Soul thither in a ſhort *Ejaculation*, without interrupting my Buſineſs; and yet theſe, and ſuch as theſe, do make up a great part of thoſe Religious Exerciſes wherein the proper Duty of our *Chriſtian Warfare* conſiſts. And though to the due performance of theſe Duties, it will be ſometimes neceſſary that our Minds ſhould dwell *longer* upon them, yet it is to be conſidered that when once we are *entered* upon the Practice of them, our Mind will be much more at *Leiſure* to attend to them; for then 'twill be in a great Meaſure taken off from its *wild* and *unreaſonable* Vagaries, from its *ſinful* Deſigns and *lewd* Contrivances, from its *Phantaſtick* Complacencies in the *Pleaſures* of Sin, and

anxious Reflections on the *Guilt* and *Danger* of it; and when all this Rubbish is thrown out of the Mind, there will be room enough for good Thoughts to dwell in it, without *interfering* with any of our necessary *Cares* and *Diversions*. For would we but give these our *Religious* Exercises *as much* Room in our Minds as we did *heretofore* freely allow to our *Sins*; they would ask no *more*, but leave us as much at *Leisure* for our other Affairs *as ever*.

I confess there are some of these Duties that exact of us their *fixt* and *stated* Portions of Time, such as our Morning *Consideration* and *Prayer*, our Evening *Examination* and *Prayer*, our religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, and our *preparing* for and *receiving* the Holy Sacrament; but all this may be very well spared without any *Prejudice* to any of our lawful Occasions. For what great matter of Time doth it ask for a Man to think over a few *good Thoughts* in the Morning, and *fore-arm* his Mind with them against the Temptations of the Day; to recommend himself to God in a *short*, *pithy*, and *affectionate* Prayer, and *repeat* his Purpose and Resolution of Obedience; what an easie matter were it for you to *borrow* so many Moments as would suffice for *this* Purpose from your *Bed*, and your *Comb* and *Looking-glass*? And as for the Evening, when your Business is over, it's a very hard case if you cannot spare so much time either from your Company or Refreshments, as to make a short *Review* of the Actions of the Day; to *confess* and beg *Pardon* for the *Evils* you have fall'n into, or to *bless* God for the *Good* you have *done*, and the *Evils* you have *avoided*;

voided; and then to recommend your selves to his Grace and Protection for the future. And as for your Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, it is only the *seventh* part of your Time; and can you think much to devote *that*, or at least the *greatest* Part of that, to him who gives you your *Being* and *Duration*? And lastly, as for your receiving the *Lord's Supper*, 'tis at most but *once* a Month that you are *invited* to it, and 'tis a hard Case, if out of so great a proportion of Time you cannot afford a *few* Hours to *examine* your *Defects*, and to *quicken* your *Graces*, and to *dress* and *prepare* your selves for that blessed Commemoration. Alas! how easie were all this to a *willing* Mind? And if we had but *half* that Concern for our Souls and everlasting Interest that we have for our Bodies, we should count such things as these not *worth* our mentioning. How *disingenuous* therefore is it for men to make such *tragical* Out-cries as they do of the *Hardship* and *Difficulty* of this *Spiritual Warfare*, when there is nothing at all in it that *intrenches* either on their *secular* Callings, or *necessary* Diversions; when they may be going *onward* to Heaven while they are doing their *Business*, and *mortifying* their Lusts even in the Enjoyment of their *Recreations*, and so take their Pleasure both *here* and *hereafter*.

VI. Consider that the Difficulty of these Duties is such, as will certainly *abate* and *wear off* by Degrees, if we *constantly* practise them. For in all Undertakings whatsoever, it is *Use* that makes *Perfectness*, and that which is exceeding *hard* to us at *first*, either through want of *Skill* to manage, or *Inclination* to practise it, will by

degrees grow *easier* and *easier*, as we are more and more *accustomed* and *familiarized* to it. And this we shall find by Experience, if we constantly exercise our selves in these *progressive* Duties of our Religion, which to a Mind that hath *been* altogether *unacquainted* with them, will at *first* be very difficult. 'Twill go against the grain of a *wild* and *ungoverned* Nature, to be confined from its *extravagant* Ranges by the *strict* Ties of a Religious *Discipline*; and to reduce a *roving* Mind to severe Consideration, or a *fickle* one to Constancy and Resolution, or an *unreflecting* one to Self-Examination; to raise up an *earthly* Mind to *heavenly* Thoughts and Expectations; and confine a *listless* and *regardless* one to strict Watchfulness and Circumspection; to confine a *carnal* mind to *frequent* Sacraments; or an *indevout* and careless one to its *daily* and *weekly* periods of Devotion, will at the first no doubt be very *painful* and *tedious*; but after we have *persisted* in, and for a while *accustomed* our selves to it, we shall find it quickly grow more *natural* and *easie* to us, and from being *grievous* it will become *tolerable*, from being tolerable *easie*, and from being easie *delightful*. For when once we come to feel the good Effects of those Duties in our Natures, how fast our Lusts do *decline*, our Dispositions *mend*, and all our Graces *improve* in the Use of them, the Sense of this will mightily *indear* and *ingratiate* them to us. Just as it is with a *Scholar*, when he first *enters* upon the Methods of *Learning*, they are very *tedious* and *irksome* to him; the Pains of *reading*, *observing*, and *recollecting*, the *Confinement* to a Study, and the *racking* his Brains with severe *Reasoning* and *Discourse*, are things that

that he cannot eaſily away with, till he hath been *inured* and *accuſtomed* to them a while, and then they grow more *natural* and *eaſie* to him; but when he comes to be ſenſible of the great *Advantages* he reaps by his Labour, how it *raiſes* and *improves* his Underſtanding, *inlarges* its Proſpect, and *furniſhes* its Conception with *brave* and *uſeful* Notions; then do his Labours which were formerly ſo *grievous*, become not only *eaſie*, but *delectable* to him. And even ſo it is with theſe *ſpiritual* Exerciſes of Religion, which to *unexperienced* perſons that are yet but newly entered upon them will be very *painful* and *troubleſome*; but if they have but *Patience* and *Courage* to hold on, Cuſtom will quickly render them more *tolerable*, and when they have practiſed them ſo long as to find and perceive the bleſſed Effects of them, how much they have contributed to the *reforming* their Tempers, *reducing* their Inclinations, *filing* and *poliſhing* their rough and miſhapen Natures; with what *amiable* Graces, *divine* and *god-like* Diſpoſitions they have *adorned* and *beautified* them; their Senſe and Feeling of *this* will convert them all into *delightful* Recreations. Thus as the Cuſtom of them will render them *eaſie*, ſo the bleſſed Fruits of them will make them *delectable*; the former will render them *facil* as Nature, the latter *eligible* as Reward. And if ſo, why ſhould we be diſcouraged, faint-hearted Creatures that we are, at thoſe little *preſent* Difficulties, which our Diligence will ſoon *wear off* and convert into *Eaſe* and *Pleaſure*?

VII. Conſider that with the *Difficulty* of them, there is a World of preſent *Peace* and

Satisfaction intermingled. If you *fall back* again to your old Lusts, instead of these *present* Difficulties you *start* at, you must expect to have the *Trouble* of a guilty Soul to contend with; which, if you have any sense of God, and of *Good* and *Evil*, will be much more *grievous* to you than they. But if you *go on*, you will carry with you a *quiet* and a *satisfied* Mind, a Conscience that will entertain you all along with such *sweet* and *calm* Reflections as will abundantly *compensate* you for all the Hardships and Difficulties you encounter on the way; that with innumerable Iterations will be always *resounding* to your *honest* Endeavours those *best* and *sweetest* Echoes, *Well done good and profitable Servant*, how *bravely* hast thou acquitted thy self, how *manfully* hast thou *stood* to thy Duty against all Oppositions, and with what a *Gallant* Resolution hast thou *repulsed* those Temptations that bore up against thee? Now for a Man to have his own Mind continually *applauding* him, and *crowning* his Actions with the Approbations of his Conscience, is Encouragement enough to *balance* a thousand Difficulties; and the Sense that he hath done his Duty, and that the God *above*, and the Vice-god *within* him, are both *satisfied* and *pleased* with him, will give him such a *grateful* Relish of each Action of his *Warfare*, that the *Difficulty* will only serve to inhance the *Pleasure* of it.

And as he will have great *Peace* and *Satisfaction* whilst he is *contending* with these Difficulties, so when he hath so far *conquered* them as that they are no longer able to *curb* and *with-hold* him from the *free* and *vigorous* Exercise of the Heavenly Vertues,

Vertues, but in despight of them he can easily *moderate* his Passions and Appetites by the Laws of his Reason, and freely *love*, *adore* and *imitate*, *submit* to, and *confide* in the ever-blessed God, and chearfully exert an unforced *Plainness* and *Simplicity*, *Good-will* and *Charity*, *Submission* and *Condescension*, *Peace* and *Concord* towards all Men; when, I say, he hath so far *surmounted* the Difficulties of his *Warfare*, as that with any Measure of Freedom and Vigour he can put forth all these Heavenly Vertues, he will find himself not only in a *quiet*, but in a *heavenly Condition*. For these Heavenly Graces are the *Palate* by which the immortal Mind *tastes* and *relishes* its Heaven, the blessed *Organs* and *Sensories* by which it *feels* and *perceives* the Joys of the World to come, and without which it can no more *relish* and *injoy* them, than the senseless Hive can the sweetness of the Honey that is in it. And consequently the more *quick* and *vivacious* these Heavenly Organs of the Mind are, and the more they are disburthened of those *carnal* and *devilish* Lusts that *blunt* their Sense and Perception, the more *accurately* they will *taste* the Joys and Pleasures of Heaven. So that when by the constant Practice of the *Warfaring* Duties of Religion, we have *conquered* those bad Inclinations of our Natures, which render the Heavenly Vertues so *difficult* to us, and do so *clog* and *incumber* us in the Exercise of them, we shall find our selves in a *Heaven* upon *Earth*, and each Act of Vertue will be a *Prescention* and *Foretaste* of the Joys of the celestial Life. And being arrived at this blessed State in which all Heavenly Vertue is so *connaturalized* to us, the sweet Experi-

Experience we ſhall have of the *unſpeakable* Joys and Pleaſures it abounds with, will cauſe us to look back with wondrous *Content* and *Satisfaction* upon all thoſe Difficulties we *contended* with in our Way to it, and bleſs thoſe *Prayers* and *Tears*, and *Strivings* with our ſelves, thoſe tedious *Watchings* and *Self-Examinations*, &c. by which we have now at laſt *conquered* and *ſubdued* them.

Wherefore ſince the Practice of theſe our *Warfaring Duties* hath ſo much *preſent* Peace going along with it, and ſince by its natural Drift and Tendency its leading us *forward* to a State of ſo much *Pleaſure* and *Satisfaction*, what a Madneſs is it, for a Man to be beaten off from it, by thoſe *preſent little* Difficulties that attend it! What Man that conſults his own Intereſt, would ever deſiſt from the proſecuting ſuch a *gainful* Warfare, in which to make him amends for the preſent pains it puts him to, he is not only poſſeſt of *Peace* of Conſcience for the *preſent*, but aſſured of a happy Life for the *future*, when he hath *conquered* the Difficulties he *contends* with.

VIII. Conſider that the *Difficulty* of theſe Duties is abundantly *compenſated* by the *Reward* of them. A generous Mind will think no *Means* too hard which tend to noble and worthy *Ends*; in the proſecution of which *Oppoſition* only whets its *Courage* and *Reſolution*. So that doubtleſs had we any Spark of Generoſity in us, the Vaſtneſs and Excellency of the *End* we purſue, would make us deſpiſe all Difficulties in the *Way* to it. What a *Meanneſs* of *Spirit* therefore doth it argue in

in us to ſtand *boggling*, as we do, at the Difficulties of Religion; to think much of ſpending a few *days* or *years* in this World in *ſtriving* and *contending* with our Inclinations, in *Conſideration* and *Watchfulneſs*, in earneſt *Prayer* and ſevere *Reflections* on our ſelves, when we are aſſured before-hand, that, at the *Concluſion* of this ſhort *Conflict* we ſhall be carried off by Angels in Triumph to Heaven, and there receive, from the Captain of our Salvation, a Crown of everlaſting Joys and Pleaſures; when after a few *Moments* Pains and Labour, we ſhall live *Millions* of *Millions* of moſt happy ages in the raviſhing Fruition of a boundleſs Good, and after theſe are expired have as many *Millions* of *Millions* more to live. What an unconſcionable thing is it for us to complain of any *Difficulty*, who have ſuch a vaſt Recompence of Reward in our *View?* In the Name of God, Sirs, what would you have? Why, we would have Heaven drop down into our Mouths, and not put us to all this Trouble of *reaching* and *climbing* after it. Would you ſo? 'Tis a very *modeſt* Deſire indeed; that is, you would have the God of Heaven *thruſt* his Favours upon you while you *ſcorn* and *deſpiſe* them, and proſtitute his Heaven to a Company of *Drones* that don't think it worth their while to go out of their Hives to gather it. O! for ſhame look once more upon *Heaven*, and conſider again what it is to dwell in the Paradiſe of the World with God and Angels and Saints, and in their bleſſed Company to live out an Eternity in the moſt rapturous *Contemplations* and *Loves* and *Joys*; to *bathe* our dilated Faculties in an over-flowing *River* of Pleaſures, and in perfect *Eaſe*, *Health*, and *Vigour* of Mind,

to

to feed upon a Happiness that is as *large* as our Capacities, and as *lasting* as our Beings. Is this a Reward of that *inconsiderable* Nature, that we should think much to *labour* and *contend* for it; is not the Hope of being *satisfied for ever*, a sufficient Encouragement to induce us to *deny* our Lusts and Appetites a *few Moments*, or is there not *Good* enough in an everlasting *Rest*, to countervail a few Days and Years *Labour* and *Contention*? What though you *pant* and *labour* now while you are *climbing* the everlasting Hills, God be praised, 'tis not so far to the Top but that the pleasant *Gales* and glorious *Prospects* you shall everlastingly enjoy there, will so abundantly *compensate* for the Difficulty of the *Ascent*, as that instead of *complaining* of it, you will, to eternal Ages, reflect upon it with *Pleasure* and *Delight*. Wherefore when your Courage begins to *shrink* at the Difficulty of your Warfare, do but lift up your Eyes to the Recompence of *Reward*, and to be sure, if you have any Heart, *that* will inspire you with such a brave Resolution, as nothing will be too hard for you but what is absolutely *impossible*. For how can we be *disheartned* at any *superable* Difficulty, so long as we are *animated* with the persuasion, that if we have our *Fruit unto Holiness*, *our End shall be Everlasting Life*.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Concerning those Duties which appertain to the Perfection *and* Consummation *of our* Christian Warfare, *shewing* what *they are, and* how *effectually they conduce to the* perfecting *us in the Vertues of the* Heavenly Life.

I proceed now to the Third and last Part of our *Christian Warfare, viz.* the *Consummation* of it, which is *final Perseverance.* For after we have *actually* ingaged, and made some *Progress* in it, our next Care and Duty is, that we do not *relapse*, and basely *retreat* from what we have so *prosperously* undertaken, and hitherto so *effectually* prosecuted, but that so long as we live we *persist* in an open *Defiance* to our Sins, and endeavour to *pursue* and *mortifie* our Inclinations to them, and *persevere* in the Practice of all Vertue; still indeavouring thereby to *improve* and *grow on* to Perfection, that so we may *die* as we have hitherto *lived*, and *consummate* our *Warfare* in a *final* Victory, and that when our Lord shall come or send his Herald, Death, to summon us off from the *Field*, we may be found *fighting* under his Banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil, and finally *die* as we have *lived*, his faithful *Soldiers* and *Followers.* For this he indispensably exacts of us, *viz. That we should be faithful unto Death*, Rev. ii. 10. *that we should patiently continue in well-doing*, Rom. ii. 7. *that we should indure to the end*, Matt. x. 22. *and hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast to the end*, Heb. iii. 14. *that we*

should

ſhould keep his works to the end, and finally *overcome* as well as fight, *Rev.* ii. 26. In a word, *that having ſet our hands to the plough, we ſhould not look back*, Luke xvi. 26. but that *we ſhould be always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. The Senſe of all which is, that we ſhould not only *begin* this our *Chriſtian Warfare*, and *proſecute* it for *a while*, but that we ſhould *proceed* and *perſevere* in it as long as we breathe, and never lay down our *Arms* till we lay down our *Lives*. In order to which, as we muſt ſtill *perſevere* in the Practice of thoſe Duties which appertain to the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our *Warfare*, ſo there are ſundry other Duties which we muſt practice, and which have a more *direct* and *immediate* Influence upon the final *Succeſs* and *Conſummation* of it. All which I ſhall reduce to theſe following Particulars:

1. That while we *ſtand*, we ſhould not be *over-confident* of our ſelves, but ſtill keep a *jealous* Eye upon the *Weakneſs* and *Inconſtancy* of our own Natures.

2. That if at any time we wilfully *fall* and *miſcarry*, we ſhould immediately *ariſe* again by Repentauce.

3. That to *prevent* the like Falls and Miſcarriages for the *future*, we ſhould endeavour to *withdraw* our Affections from the Temptations of the World, but more eſpecially from *thoſe* which were the *Occaſions* of our Fall.

4. That we ſhould more *curiouſly* ſearch into the *ſmaller* Defects and Indecencies of our Nature, in order to our *reforming* and *correcting* them.

5. That

5. That, ſo far as *lawfully* we can, we ſhould live in a cloſe *Communion* with the *Church* whereof we are Members.

6. That we ſhould not, out of a *fond* Opinion that we are good *enough* already, *ſtint* our progreſs in Religion to any determinate *Degree* or *Meaſure* of Goodneſs.

7. That we ſhould *frequently* entertain our ſelves with the proſpect of our *Mortality*, and endeavour to *compoſe* our ſelves before-hand into a good *Poſture* of *Dying*.

8. That, in order thereunto, we ſhould be wondrous *careful* to *diſcharge* our Conſciences of all the *Relicks* and *Remains* of our paſt *Guilt*.

9. That to *compenſate* for theſe, ſo far as we are able, we ſhould take care to redeem the Time we have formerly ſpent in *ſinful* Courſes, by being *doubly* diligent in the Exerciſe of all the contrary *Vertues*, and the doing all the contrary *Good* we are able.

10. That we ſhould labour after a *Rational* and *well-grounded Aſſurance* of Heaven.

I. To the *Perfection* and *Conſummation* of our *Chriſtian Warfare*, it is neceſſary that while we *ſtand*, we ſhould not be *over-confident* of our ſelves, but ſtill keep a *jealous* Eye upon the *Weakneſs* and *Inconſtancy* of our own Natures. For thus the Apoſtle declares it to be the Will of God, that *we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves*, i. e. *rely* too much upon our own *Strength* and *Ability*, 2 Cor. i. 9. and elſewhere he admoniſhes, *let him that thinks he ſtands* (or, the *preſent* being put for the *future*, as it is very frequently, *let him that thinks he ſhall ſtand*) *take heed leſt he fall*, 1 Cor. x. 12. ſo alſo,

Rom.

Rom. xi. 20. *Thou ſtandeſt by Faith, be not high-minded, but fear, i. e.* it is thy *Faith* that *upholds* thee, but be not *too ſecure* of thy *Support*, leſt thou alſo *fall* and *periſh*, as thy Brethren, the Jews, have done before thee. And hence we are bid *to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. *i. e.* with a holy *Solicitude* and *Jealouſie*, leſt one time or other we ſhould be *tempted* and *overcome*, and, at the laſt, finally *miſcarry*. And indeed there is nothing doth more expoſe Men to the hazard of *falling*, than too much *Confidence* in their own Strength. This makes them venture upon a thouſand *Temptations*, which they might have *fairly*, and much more *prudently* avoided; and hurries them hand over head into ſuch inviting *Occaſions* and *Opportunities* of ſinning, as do too often *inveagle* and *betray* them, in deſpight of all their good Reſolutions to the contrary. Whereas, had they but *ſuſpected themſelves*, and not *preſumed* too much upon their own Stedfaſtneſs, they would many a time have kept out of *harms-way*, and avoided the Snares that did *intangle* them; but by venturing, like *Sampſon*, to lay down their Heads in a *Dalilah*'s Lap, in *Confidence* of the Strength of their own Reſolution, they have been inſenſibly *inticed*, after ſome *coy* Refuſals, to betray themſelves into the Snare of the Devil.

And as, through an over-weening *Confidence* of our own Strength, we *expoſe* our ſelves to many needleſs Temptations, ſo we do alſo, too often, provoke God to *withdraw* his Grace and Aſſiſtance from us, and to leave us to contend *alone* with thoſe Temptations whereunto we do ſo

confidently

confidently expose our selves. For as he is always ready to *assist* us, so he always expects that we should acknowledge our *Need* of, and *Dependence* upon him, and not presume too much upon our *own* Strength, which without his gracious *Concurrence*, is *Weakness* and *Impotence*. When therefore without God's *Call* and *Warrant* we will needs *rush* into Temptations in Confidence of our own *Ability* to resist and conquer them, he many times leaves us without his *Aid* and *Assistance*, that so he may chastise our *Presumption* by permitting us to be *defeated*, and convince us by the woful Experiment of our *Fall*, how *unable* we are to stand without his Aid and Support. It is our daily Prayer that God would *not lead us into Temptation*; but if for our Trial he thinks meet to do so, we have all Assurance that if we be not wanting to our selves, *He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. x. 13. But if we will lead *our selves* into Temptation, in Confidence of our own Ability to *contend* with, and *break* through it, God is so far from being obliged to *second* us in our *Folly* and unwarrantable *Rashness*, that he is justly *provoked* by it to *abandon* us to our selves, and, as a certain Consequence of that, to permit us to be *vanquisht* and *led captive*. Wherefore as we hope to persevere to the *End*, and to bring our Warfare to a happy *Conclusion*, it is highly necessary that we should always keep a *jealous* Eye upon our selves, and not *confide* too much in our own Strength and Ability.

II. To our *final* Perseverance in the *Christian Warfare*, it is also necessary that if at any time we wilfully *fall* and *miscarry* in it, we should *immediately arise* again by Repentance. For what is forbidden us as to *one* sin, equally extends to *all*, *let not the Sun go down upon your wrath*, Eph. iv. 26. that is, if you have *wilfully* given the Reins to your Wrath, suffer it not to break forth into *contumelious Behaviour*, but repent of it *immediately*, before the Sun sets; according to that old Practice of the *Pythagoreans*, mentioned by *Plutarch*, who when at any time they fell into *reproachful* Language out of Anger, Τὰς δεξίας ἐμβάλλοντες ἀλλήλοις καὶ ἀσπαζόμενοι πρὶν ἢ τὸν ἥλιον δῦναι διελύοντο· *i. e.* before ever the Sun set they always took care to be *reconciled*, and constantly *shook hands* with, and *embraced* one another; and the reason of the Prohibition, which you have in the next verse, *viz. neither give place to the Devil*, that is, by suffering your *Wrath* to grow into inveterate *Malice*, equally extends to all *other* Sins, which if they be not *immediately rooted* out by Repentance, will quickly *improve* into Habits. So that we have as much reason to repent of our *Lust* before the Sun rises on it, and of our *Fraud* and *Oppression* before it hath *run its course* on it, as of our *Wrath* before it *goes down* upon it. And consequently, by a parity of Reason, the Prohibition must extend to all *other* Sins as well as *this*, and oblige us, whenever we have *wilfully* sinn'd in any Particular, to *revoke* and *expiate* it by an *immediate* Act of Repentance.

For he that hath *sinn'd* wilfully and not *repented* of it, doth all the while continue an obstinate *Rebel*

Rebel againſt God, and is ſo far from *perſevering* in the *Chriſtian Warfare*, that he is actually liſted a *Voluntier* in the *adverſe* Party. And if after we have *thus* ſinn'd, Death ſhould *interpoſe* between us and our Repentance, (as who knows but it may if we repent not *immediately*) we ſhall be ſo far from *conſummating* our *Chriſtian Warfare* in *Victory*, that we ſhall die *Vaſſals* to the Devil. But then, as by ſinning *wilfully* we do *deſert* God, ſo by continuing *impenitent* under it we ſtill run *farther* and *farther* from him, and thereby make ſo *wide* a Gap and Interruption in our Religious Progreſs, as will not be eaſily *repaired* again; and whereas had we *repented* and *come back* without *Delay* as ſoon as we had *ſtrayed* from our Duty, we might have ſoon *recovered* the Ground we had loſt by it, and by a little more Diligence have gotten as far *onward* as if we had never interrupted our Progreſs at all: by *deferring* our Repentance we ſet our ſelves farther and farther *back*, and ſhall every day be more and more *indiſpoſed* to return. For in the courſe of our Religion there is no *ſtanding ſtill*, but either we are *progreſſive* or *retrograde*, going *backward* or *forward* as long as we live; ſo that when once we are *out* of our Way, we are ſtill going *farther* out, till ſuch time as we *return* again, and conſequently the *longer* we are out, the harder 'twill be to return, and the *farther* we ſhall have to the end of our Way. For when I firſt ſin, and the Wound of my Innocence is yet *green* and *freſh*, it may eaſily be cured by the timely Application of a ſorrowful *Confeſſion* and new *Reſolution* of Amendment; but if I neglect it, 'twill *rot* and *putrifie*; my *Senſe* of it will be

hardned, and my *Inclination* to it grow every day more *inveterate*, and then if it be not *lanc'd* and *corroded* by a *sharp*, a *long*, and a *painful* Repentance, it will turn into an incurable *Gangrene*. Hence the Apostle bids us *exhort one another daily, while it is called to day*, that is, to *repent* while it is called to day, *lest any of us be hardned through the deceitfulness of sin*, Heb. iii. 13. So that when we have *wilfully* sinn'd, we run a mighty Hazard of our *final* perseverance, if we don't repent *immediately*. For all the while we *delay*, our Conscience grows more *feared*, and our Lust grows more *confirmed*, and God knows where it will end, but 'tis fearfully to be *suspected* that *that* neglected Bruise which we got by our Fall will grow *worse* and *worse*, and determine at last in final *Impenitency*. Wherefore as we intend to *persevere* in well-doing, it concerns us in the *first* place to take all possible Care not to give way to any *wilful* sin, nor suffer our selves by any Hopes or Fears to be tempted from our good *Resolution*; but if at any time our wicked Inclinations should prevail against it, to betake our selves *immediately* to a serious Repentance, to make a sorrowful *Confession* of it to our offended God, and solemnly renew our *Resolution* against it, that so we may stop the growing evil *betime*, before it's capable of indangering our *final* Apostacy.

III. To our final *perseverance*, it's necessary that to *prevent* the like Falls and Miscarriages for the *future*, we should indeavour to *withdraw* our Affections from the Temptations of the World, but more especially from *those* Temptations which were the *Occasions* of our Fall. For thus we are strictly

ſtrictly prohibited *to ſet our affections upon things on the earth*, Col. iii. 21. *to love the World, and the things that are in the World*, 1 John ii. 15. *to lay up for our ſelves treaſures upon earth*, Mat. vi. 19. and it is the proper Character of a true Chriſtian *to be crucified to the World*, Gal. iv. 14. and to converſe *as a Stranger and a Pilgrim in it*, Heb. xi. 13. As on the contrary, *to mind earthly things, and to be lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God*, are made the proper Characters of Infidels and Apoſtates, *Phil.* 3. 19. compared with 2 *Tim.* ii. 4. And ſo inconſiſtent is an inordinate Affection to the World, with our *perſeverance* in the Chriſtian Warfare, that St. *James* expreſly tells us, *That the friendſhip of the World is enmity with God*, Jam. iv. 4 and 'tis to the Exceſs of our friendſhip to it that the Scripture frequently attributes our Apoſtacy, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. and the Apoſtle tells us, *That they that will be rich*, that is, immoderately covet to be ſo, *fall into temptation and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in perdition and deſtruction; and that the love of money is the root of all evil*, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. From all which it's apparent, how neceſſary it is, in the accounts of Chriſtianity, in order to our *perſeverance*, that we ſhould indeavour to *wean* and *abſtract* our ſelves from the World.

For this World is the *Magazine* of all thoſe Temptations by which our Vertue and Innocence is *importuned* and *aſſaulted*; and 'tis either the *Hope* of ſome worldly *Pleaſure*, *Profit*, or *Honour* that *allures*, or the *Fear* of ſome of the contrary Evils which are incident to us in the Courſe of Religion that *affrights* us from our Duty. Whilſt

therefore we *immoderately* love those *Goods* and *Evils* which are the *Sollicitors* of Vice, we are in very great danger of being *conquered* and *led captive* by it. For 'tis not for the sake of *sinning* that Men sin, but for the sake of those *Goods*, or to avoid those *Evils* which are appendent to their *sinning* or *not sinning*; and consequently, the more a Man *loves* those *Goods* which cling and adhere to a sinful Action, the more propense he will be to the Commission of it; and the more he *dreads* those *Evils* which he can most easily avoid by a sinful Action, the more prone and inclinable he will be to it. Wherefore to secure our *perseverance* in this Warfare against sin, it is absolutely necessary that we *rectifie* our *Opinion* of the *Goods* and *Evils* of this World, and *moderate* and *abate* our *Affection* towards them, especially towards *those* that have been most *prevalent* with us. For the Temptation that prevails upon us *discovers* the *weak* Side of our Nature, and *instructs* the Devil what *Good* or *Evil* it is that is most apt to *allure* or *affright* us; and to be sure that *subtle* Tempter, who hath been so many Thousand Years *studying* the Arts of *seducing* us, will not fail to assault us *again* where he hath been already *successful*; and therefore it concerns us to *fortifie* our selves there, where we have so much reason to expect the Enemy will *assault* us, and to *rectifie* our *Opinions* of, and *mortifie* our Affections to those things which have already so much *imposed* upon our Virtue and Innocence. For 'tis our *Imagination* that gives *Life* and *Efficacy* to the *Charms* and *Terrours* of the World, and renders them so successful against us; we *fansie* that to be in them which

which is not, and so are *affected* not so much with the things *themselves*, as with the false *Representations* we make of them.

For it's plain the *Goods* of the World are beholden to *our selves* for the greatest part of those *Beauties* with which they *tempt* and *allure* us; and 'tis our *Fancy* that gives the *Paint* and *Fucus* with which they *charm* and *inamour* our Affections; and so for the *Evils* of the World, 'tis our own *Imagination* that *disguises* them into such *Bugs* and *Scare-crows*, and puts those ghastly *Vizors* on them with which they *fright* and *amaze* us. If therefore we would but take care to *rectifie* our *Opinions* of them both, and to strip them out of their *imaginary* Terrours and Allurements, we should thereby *disarm* them of their main Strength, and render them much less able to seduce us for the *future*. And this methinks we might easily do, if we would but fairly represent to our selves the present *State* and *Posture* of our Affairs. For we are a sort of Beings, that are every Moment travelling from *hence* to an *eternal* World, where an *unexpressible* Happiness or Misery attends us; and all that we *enjoy* or *suffer* in this Life, is only the *Convenience* or *Inconvenience* of a *short* Journey to a *long* Home, but can have no other Influence upon our *everlasting* Condition, than as it is the Occasion either of our *Virtue* or *Vice*, which are the only *Goods* and *Evils* that will accompany us to Eternity, and make us *happy* or *miserable* there for ever. But as for *Poverty* or *Riches*, *Pain* or *Pleasure*, *Disgrace* or *Reputation*, they are things which probably within these ten or twenty Years will be as perfectly *indifferent* to us as our last Nights *Dream*

was when we awoke in the Morning. And this, methinks, duly *considered*, were enough to render us very *unconcerned* at any *Good* or *Evil* that can happen to us here. For what a mighty Matter is it whether I fare *well* or *ill* for twenty or thirty Years, who when that is expired must be *happy* or *miserable* for Millions of Millions of Ages; and what will these *little* Goods or Evils signifie to me, when my *Body* is in the Grave, and my *Soul* in Eternity? When I am *stript* into a naked Spirit, and set *ashore* upon the invisible World, then all these things will *be* as if they never were, and in the twinkling of an Eye I shall *lose* Sight of them for ever; and of all that *I enjoyed* or *suffered* in this Life I shall have nothing remaining but my *Virtue* or *Vice*, whose Issues will prove my eternal *Happiness* or *Misery*. Doubtless, would we but accustom our Minds to such Reflections as these, they would effectually *restrain* us from the immoderate *Love* or *Fear* of the things of this World, and reduce us to a *constant* and *efficacious* Persuasion, that there is no *Good* in this World *comparable* to that of doing our *Duty*, nor any *Evil* incident to us in this Life, that is not infinitely less *formidable* than *Sin*. And when once our *Affection* to this World, and our *Opinion* of the *Goods* and *Evils* of it, are thus *moderated* and *rectified*, the Temptations to Sin will quite *lose* their *hold* of us, and be no more able to *fasten* upon our Resolution. So that now we may pass safely through them whilst they are *sparkling* about us, there being no *Tinder* in our Breasts for them to *catch fire* and *kindle* upon. Now they will be no longer capable to *allure* or *affright* us, those bosom Orators

tors being *silenced* that were wont to *contend* for them, and to *magnifie* their *Charms* and *Terrors*; and when we neither immoderately *love* nor *fear* them, 'twill be no hard matter to *defend* our Vertue and Innocence against all their *Assaults* and *Importunities.*

IV. To our *final* Perseverance, it is necessary that we should more *curiously* search into the *smaller* Defects and Indecencies of our Nature, in order to our *reforming* and *correcting* them. Hence we are commanded *to hate even the garments spotted by the flesh*, Jude 23. *i e.* to take care of the *Beginnings* of Sin, of any thing that hath the least *Spot* or *Infection* of it, and accordingly we are obliged not only to take care to *rub out* the greater *Stains* of our Nature, but *to be diligent that we may be found of our Lord in peace without spot and blameless*, 2 Pet. iii. 14. *i. e.* to endeavour to reform those *smaller* and more *indiscernable* Defects of our Nature, which though they do not totally *stain*, yet very much *spot* and *blemish* it; that so at the coming of our Lord we may be found not only *sincere* and *upright*, but, as near as may be, *innocent* and *blameless* For so, *Phil.* ii. 15. we are bid to *be blameless, harmless, and without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation*, *i. e.* to endeavour so to demean our selves in this World, as that we may appear, not only honest *for the main*, but, so near as is possible, *spotless* and *unreprovable.* And indeed there is nothing doth more frequently occasion Mens *final* Miscarriage in Religion, than their not being *careful* and *diligent* in this matter. When they first enter into the Christian Warfare, they very industriously set them-

themſelves againſt that Courſe of wilful Sin in which they formerly lived, and this were wondrous well, if they did not ſtop here, and go no *farther*; but alas, in the mean time, while they are thus induſtriouſly buſied in ſubduing their *old* Sins, there are a great many leſſer *Flaws* and *Defects* in their Nature, which by a timely Care and Inſpection, they might eaſily correct; but theſe they take no Notice of, but quietly permit them to *grow* and *increaſe*, till at laſt they become as *hurtful* and dangerous to them as their old Sins were, againſt which they have all this while ſo zealouſly contended. As, for inſtance, when they firſt entered upon a Reſolution of Amendment, they were *profane*, it may be, or *ſenſual*, or vehemently addicted to *Fraud* and *Oppreſſion*; and againſt theſe they oppoſed themſelves with great *Zeal* and *Animoſity*; and ſo far they did *well*; but, in the mean time, perhaps there was *Pride* and *Oſtentation*, *Envy* and *Peeviſhneſs*, *Self-will* and *Cenſoriouſneſs*, ſecretly *budding* and *ſprouting* up in their Natures, all which they might have eaſily cured by *timely* Applications; but alas! in the heat of their Conteſt, againſt their *other* Sins, they never ſo much as minded or regarded *theſe*, but e'en left them alone till they *grew* up into obſtinate and inveterate Habits, and became every whit as *fatal* and *deſtructive* to their Souls, as *thoſe* were which they have been all this while *ſubduing* and *mortifying*. So that, after all, they have only *changed* their Sins, and have been *conjuring up* one Devil while they have been *laying* another; and whilſt the Tide of their Wickedneſs hath been *ebbing* on this Shore, it hath been *flowing* on the contrary, and

as

as it hath *ſunk* in *Senſuality*, it hath *ſwelled* into Deviliſhneſs. Perhaps whilſt you are zealouſly carrying on your Warfare againſt your old Sins, you may find your ſelves too apt to be *tickled* with Applauſe, and *puffed* with vain Oſtentation; have a Care now, that while you are *ſtarving* one Vice, you do not *pamper* another. For if you do not correct this *little* Irregularity of your Nature *betimes*, 'twill ſoon be as *dangerous* and *miſchievous* to you, as ever any of thoſe Vices were, againſt which you are contending; 'twill, by degrees, ſo *inſinuate* into your good Intentions, and ſo *ſophiſticate* the Purity of them, that at laſt you will *intend* nothing elſe but *Applauſe*; and ſo your whole Religion will be converted into dead *Shew* and empty *Pageantry*, and your ſpiritual Warfare will prove only a paſſage out of *Profaneneſs* into *Hypocriſie*. It may be whilſt you are contending againſt thoſe *fleſhly* Inclinations, by which you have formerly been captivated, your Hearts will begin to *ſwell* with an *over-weening* Conceit of your own Vertue and Godlineſs, and as a Conſequence of that, to entertain *contemptuous* and *cenſorious* Thoughts of your Brethren; beware now, that whilſt you are *ſtruggling* with your old fleſhly Luſts, you do not *overlook* theſe little *Defects* and *Indecencies* of your Nature; leſt while you are conquering *one* ſort of ſins, you be captivated by *another*. For if you do not take care to *nip* them in their *Buds*, and to *check* theſe little *Eſſays* and *Beginnings* of them, they will ſoon *ſpring up* into Habits of *Pride* and *Inſolence*, *Rancour* and *Uncharitableneſs*, and ſo your Warfare againſt Sin will be only a *Tranſition* from *one* Evil into *another*, from

from the Pollutions of the *Flesh* into the Pollutions of the *Spirit*, and from the Nature of *Beasts* into the Nature of *Devils*. Wherefore, if you would be *finally* successful in the Christian Warfare, you must take great care, that while you are contending with the *grosser* and *more inveterate* Vices of your Nature, you do not neglect its *lesser* Defects and Irregularities; for whilst they are *lesser* they may be *easily* corrected, but if they are not, they will soon grow *greater*, and, in the end, prove as *dangerous* as those you are now contending with. For every Vice is *small* in the Beginning, and *easie* to be cured, but if it be *neglected*, like a scratch in the Flesh, it will *corrupt* and *rankle* into a spreading *Gangrene*.

V. To our *Perseverance* to the End in this our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary, that, so far as *lawfully* we can, we should live in close *Communion* with the *Church*, whereof we are Members. 'Tis true, a particular Church may be so *corrupted*, as that its Members may be obliged to *dis-unite* themselves from it. For every man is obliged by Vertue of his being in *any* Society, not to agree to any thing which tends to the apparent *Ruine* of it. Now the main End of *Christian* Society being the *Honour* of *God*, and the *Salvation* of *Souls*, every Man that enters into it is thereby obliged in his own Station to *advance* this End; and consequently, as to *join* in all Acts of the Christian Society he is *united* to, so far as they tend thereunto, so to *refuse* all such Acts of that Society, if any *such* should be injoined, as do apparently *oppose*, and are directly *repugnant* to it. So that if any Act that is apparently *sinful*, be

be injoined by the particular Church, whereof I am a Member, as a neceſſary Condition of my *Communion* with her, I am bound to *abſtain* from it, for the ſake of the *general* End of Chriſtian Society. As, for inſtance, ſuppoſe the *Church*, whereof I am a *Member*, require it as a Condition of my Communion, that I ſhould tranſgreſs any *juſt* Law of the *Common-wealth*, whereof I am a *Subject*; in this Caſe I am bound rather to *deſert* that Churches Communion, than live in wilful *Diſobedience* to the Civil Authority. And this is the Caſe of thoſe Men, who, though they live in a Chriſtian Commonwealth, have been *Baptized* into, and *bred up* in the Communion of *particular* Congregations, that, contrary to Law, have *ſeparated* themſelves from the *Eſtabliſh'd*, *National* Church; for if in this *National* Church there be nothing impoſed on them, by the Laws of the *Commonwealth*, that is apparently contradictory to the Laws of *Chriſt*, they are bound in Conſcience to *deſert* thoſe *ſeparate* Congregations (allowing them to be *true* Churches) and to *join* themſelves with the Church *National*; and if they do not, they are wilful Offenders againſt the Law of Chriſt, which requires us to obey all Humane Ordinances *for the Lord's ſake*. And again, ſuppoſing *one* National Church to be ſubject to *another*, that which is *ſubject* is bound to refuſe the Communion of that which is *ſuperiour*, if it cannot enjoy it without complying with Impoſitions that are apparently *ſinful*. Which is evidently the Caſe between *us* and the *Church of Rome*, ſuppoſing that *de jure* we were once her *Subjects* and *Members*; for had we been ſo, we ſhould doubtleſs never

never have *separated* our selves from her, could we but have *separated* her *Sins* from her Communion; could we have profest her *Creed* without *implicity* believing all her Cheats and Impostures, or submitted our selves to her *Guides* without apparent Danger of being *misled* by them into the Pit of Destruction, or join'd with her publick *Services* without *worshipping* of *Creatures*, or received her *Sacraments* without practising the grossest *Superstitions* and *Idolatries*. But when she had made it necessary for us either to *sin with*, or *separate from* her, we could have no other *honest* Remedy but only to *withdraw*; and if in this our *Separation* there had been a sinful *Schism* on either side, we could have appealed to Heaven and Earth, *whose* the Guilt of it was; *theirs* that forced us upon it, or *ours* that were forced to it. But yet the Case of *our* Separation from the *Church of Rome*, is vastly different from that of the Separation of *private* Members from their own *particular* Churches. For we affirm that the *Church of Rome* is but a *particular* Church, whose *Authority* extends no farther than to its own *native* Members, and consequently hath no more Power to impose Laws of Communion upon *us*, than *we* have upon *her*; our particular Church being altogether as *distinct* and *independent* from *her*, as *she* is from *ours*. So that though the Terms of Communion she imposes upon her own Members were all of them *lawful* and *innocent*, yet do they no more *oblige* us as we are *Christians* of the *Church of England*, than the *lawful* Commands of the *Great Mogul* do, as we are *Subjects* of the *Kingdom of England*.

But

But the Case of *private* Members, whether of *ours*, or any *other* particular Church, is vastly different. For if we will allow *particular* Churches to be so many *formed Societies* of Christians; (as we must do, or else degrade them into so many *confused Multitudes*) we must necessarily allow them to have a just *Authority* (even as all other formed Societies have) over their own Members. And that they have so, is evident, not only from the Nature of the thing, but also from *Scripture*, where the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of particular Churches are said to be constituted by the Holy Ghost *Overseers* of their particular Flocks, *Acts* xx. 28. which word, both in *sacred* and *prophane* Writ, denotes a *ruling* Power. And accordingly these Overseers are elsewhere called *Ruling-Elders*, 1 *Tim.* v. 17. and the Subjects and Members of their Churches are required *to obey them, as those that have the rule over them*, Heb. xiii. 17. and elsewhere the Apostle exhorts them to *know*, i. e. *submissively to own* the Authority of those that were *over them in the Lord*, 1 Thes. v. 12. By all which it's evident, that the Members of *particular* Churches are by *divine Institution* subjected to the *Authority* of their *spiritual Governours*, and obliged in *all things* to *obey them*, wherein they are not *countermanded* by Christ himself. So that tho' *one* particular Church may *refuse* the Impositions of *another*, and that not only as they are *sinful*, but as they are *Impositions*, because the other hath no *lawful Authority* over it; yet it is by no means *lawful* for the Subjects of any *particular* Church to *disobey* their Church-Governours in any *lawful* Matter; because being *subjected* to their *Authorit*

thority by Christ the Supreme Head of the *Church-Catholick*, they are obliged to submit to them as to his *Substitutes* and *Vicegerents* in every thing which he hath not *antecedently* prohibited. And if rather than do so, they shall chuse to revolt from the Communion of their Church, they are *Schismaticks*, or, which is the same thing, they are *Rebels* to Christ's Authority in that particular Church they revolt from. For what *Faction* is in the *State*, that is *Schism* in the *Church*, *viz.* an *unjust* Opposition to Authority; the one to Christ's *Civil* Authority derived upon our *Magistrates*, the other to his *spiritual* Authority derived upon our *Bishops* and *Ecclesiastical* Governours.

'Tis true, in some Cases, as I hinted before, *withdrawing* from the Communion of a Church may be so far from being a *Rebellion* against Christ, that it may be an Act of *Duty* and *Obedience* to him. For where Christ, who is my *Supreme* Lord, and my *Ecclesiastical* Governours, who are in Authority *under him*, command things that are directly *inconsistent*, I am doubtless bound to obey *him* rather than them; yea, though their Commands are not inconsistent in *themselves*, yet if I am *fully perswaded* they are, it is all one to *me*. For when I do what I *falsly* believe Christ hath *forbidden*, I am in *Will* as much a *Rebel* against his Authority, as when I do what I *truly* believe he hath forbidden. And so, by *not complying* with my spiritual Governours out of an *innocent Mis-perswasion* that what they command is *unlawful*, I do *formally*, and in *Will* as much *obey* Christ in so doing, as if it were *really* unlawful. So that, in short, when the Governours of the Church, whereof I am a Member,

do

do impose as the Conditions of my Communion, things that are either unlawful *in themselves*, or that, after *due Examination*, I verily *believe* are unlawful, I am bound in Obedience to the Authority of Christ, rather to *desert* that Communion, than to *comply* with the Terms and Conditions of it.

But since to *desert* the Communion of a Church is a matter of *vast* Moment, (as I shall prove by and by) it ought not to be done without the greatest *Caution* and *Tenderness*. For he that rejects *sinful Terms* of *Communion* without *just* Enquiry and *sufficient* Examination, is *formally* as much a *Schismatick*, i. e. he is as much a Rebel in *Will* to Christ's Spiritual Authority in his Church *Delegates* and *Vicegerents*, as he that *rashly* rejects *innocent* and *lawful ones*. For had it been only the *Sinfulness* of the Condition that displeased him, he would have made Conscience before he presumed to reject it, *duly* to inform himself whether it were *sinful* or *no*; but by thus rejecting it *at a venture*, without a *due* Enquiry into the nature of it, he plainly shews that 'twas not so much the *Sin* that displeased him, as the *Authority* that imposed it; and that 'twas not his *Conscience* that took offence at it, but his *Humour*; and consequently, that he would have had the same *Dislike* of it, though it had been *lawful* and *innocent*. For *Conscience* being an Act of the *Judgment* and *Reason*, cannot be offended without *Reason* either *real* or *apparent*? and without making a *due* Enquiry into the Nature of the thing we are offended at, we can have no *Reason* that will either *warrant* or *excuse* our Offence.

Now to a *due* Enquiry, it is neceſſary that we ſhould *impartially* examine *both ſides* of the Queſtion; and that while we are doing ſo, we ſhould keep *both* our Ears open to the Matter in Debate, and *equally* attend to what can be ſaid *for*, as well as to what can be ſaid *againſt* it; and then that upon a full hearing of *both*, we ſhould determine, as near as we can, on which ſide the *Truth* lies, without *Favour* or *Affection*. For he that enquires only what can be ſaid *againſt* the Matter he is offended at, doth thereby give a plain Indication that he is reſolved to be offended at it *right or wrong*; and that the End of his Enquiry is not ſo much to *ſatisfie* his *Conſcience*, as to *fortifie* his unreaſonable *Prejudice*. Wherefore before we do *reject* the Conditions of our Churches Communion as *ſinful*, we are obliged under the Penalty of *wilful Schiſm*, impartially to enquire what is to be ſaid *for* as well as *againſt* them; and for this End to *apply* our ſelves to our Spiritual Governours and Paſtors, and propoſe our *Doubts* to them, and attend to their *Reſolutions* with an *honeſt*, *teachable* Mind, that is willing to be informed; and where we are *capable* of judging, faithfully to peruſe thoſe *Books* and *Arguments* that make for the *one* ſide as well as the *other*. For unleſs we do thus, it's plain that we are *biaſſed* by a factious Inclination, and that we have a *great Mind* to ſeparate from the Churches Communion. For if we were not *prejudiced* againſt her Authority by a *Schiſmatical* Temper of Mind, we ſhould be as forward at leaſt to conſult what *may* be ſaid *for* her Impoſitions, as what *is* ſaid *againſt* them.

But

But then if the Matters ſhe impoſes are ſuch as a *plain* and *illiterate* Communicant cannot *judge of*, nor *comprehend* the Force of the Reaſons that make for, or againſt them, *ſuch* Perſons *in ſuch* Caſes are obliged humbly to *acquieſce* in the Churches Authority, and not *blindly* to ſeparate from her they *know not why*. As for Inſtance, ſuppoſe the Matter impoſed ſhould be ſuch a *Form* of Government, or ſuch *Modes* of Diſcipline, or *Rights* and *Circumſtances* of Divine Worſhip as carry no ſuch *apparent* Evil in them, or *expreſs* Contradiction to any Command of our Saviour, as to inable an *illiterate* Chriſtian rationally to pronounce them *unlawful*, and whether they be *unlawful* or no, is not to be determined perhaps without ſome Skil in the *Original* Languages, and the *critical* Acceptations of Phraſes, or inſight into *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* or *Metaphyſical* Niceties and Speculations; and 'tis by ſome of *theſe* that moſt of the Controverſies between *us* and our *diſſenting Brethren* are to be *judged* and *decided*. Now in ſuch Matters as theſe, where he cannot judge for *himſelf*, what ſhould an *unlearned* Communicant do? Why, this he knows well enough, that 'tis his Duty in all *lawful* things to ſubmit to the Governours of his Church, and *reverence* Chriſt's Authority in them; but whether the above-named matters they impoſe be *lawful* or *no*, he neither *doth* nor *can* know. So that if upon the ſcore of thoſe Impoſitions, he *rejects* the Churches Communion, he rejects it he *knows not why*; and to avoid doing that which he doth *not know* is a *Sin*, he *refuſes* to do that which he *knows* is a *Duty*. So that whether that which the Church impoſes be lawful or no, 'tis apparent *Rebellion* in

him to *refuse* it; because for all that he knows it is *lawful*, and though it should be *unlawful*, yet that cannot be the Motive of *his* Non-compliance with it, who doth not *understand* the Reasons that make it so. He therefore that *separates* from the Communion of the Church for Causes that he cannot *judge of*, must necessarily separate without Cause or Reason; he can have neither *true* nor *false* Pretence for his *Separation*; because the Arguments *pro* and *con* are beyond the Sphere of his Cognizance; and consequently, if he thereupon *withdraw* from the Churches Communion, 'tis not because he *cannot* comply with her *sinful* Impositions, but because *he will not* submit to her *just* Authority. Whereas by modestly submitting *our* Judgment to the *Churches*, in Cases where we cannot judge for *our selves*, we take an effectual Course to secure our Innocence. For though that which the Church injoins us should be *materially* sinful, yet to us who neither *do* nor *can* understand it to be so, it will be imputed only as an *innocent* Error; because by following the *Churches* Reason where our *own cannot* guide us, we take the best Course we can *not to be* mistaken; and if we *should* be mistaken, we have this to *excuse* us, that 'twas by following an Authority which God Himself hath set over us; whereas if we are mistaken on the *other side*, we are left altogether *inexcusable*.

But then there may be other Conditions of Church Communion, of whose *unlawfulness* a Communicant may be very *doubtful*, though he be not *confidently perswaded of it*; and what is to be done in this Case? To which I answer; First, that

that 'tis doubtless our Duty not *Rashly* to determine any thing to be *false* or *unlawful* which our Spiritual Governous have determined to be *true* or *lawful.* For we are bound by the Law of Christian *Modesty* to conclude, That they having a *larger* Prospect of things than we, and *greater* Advantages of enquiring into them, are far more *capable* Judges of what is true and lawful; and consequently, though we may possibly have some *little* Probability that their *Opinion* is false, or their *Command* unlawful, yet we ought not to *determine* it so, unless it be in such *plain* and *evident* Cases as do not only out weigh the *Probability* of their Opinions, but the *Authority* of them too. Wherefore in Cases of a *doubtful* Nature, 'tis both *modest* and *safe* to subscribe to the Judgment of our Superiours; because in so doing we have not only our own *Ignorance* to *excuse*, but their *Authority* to *warrant* us, and if we should happen to be in the *Wrong* through our *Modesty* and *Humility*, 'twill be safer for us than to be in the *Right* through our *Pride* and *Self-conceit.* But perhaps the *Probability* of our side may be so *great*, or at least *seem so* to us, that notwithstanding we give all *due* Respect and Deference to her Authority, we cannot forbear *doubting* of the Lawfulness of her Conditions of Communion. If so, then, Secondly, 'tis to be considered that 'tis as much our Duty to *Obey* her Commands in things that are *lawful*, as *not* to Obey them in things that are *unlawful*; and therefore if we only *doubt* whether her Commands be lawful or no, our Doubt ought to make us as fearful of *disobeying* as it doth of *obeying* them, because the Danger of sinning is on both

sides *equal.* And therefore in this Case, wherein I am necessitated to determine my self *one* way or *t' other*, it is doubtless my Duty to determine on that side which makes most for the Churches *Security* and *Peace*, which next to the Honour of God and the Salvation of Souls ought to be preferred above all things; and which consequently, if it be of any *Weight* with me, must necessarily *turn* the Scale of my Choice when it is before in *Æquilibrio*; and whether to *obey* or *disobey* be most for the Churches *Peace*, is very easie to be determined.

The Sum of all therefore is this, That 'tis our Duty to continue in strict *Obedience* to, and *Communion* with that *Particular* Church whereof we are Members, so long as it injoins us nothing that is *plainly* and *apparently sinful*; that if either we cannot judge of the *Sinfulness* or *Lawfulness* of her Conditions of Communion, or do only *doubt* of their *Lawfulness*, we are obliged to submit to her Judgment and Authority, and not to *separate* from her till upon an impartial Enquiry into the Reasons of both sides, we are *fully convinced* that they are *sinful.*

Now that this is an indispensable Duty of our Religion, is evident not only from the above-named Scriptures by which the *Bishops* of particular Churches are constituted the *Overseers* and *Governours* of them, and the Subjects and Members of those Churches are required to yield them *Obedience*; but also from those Texts which forbid *Divisions* in the *particular* Churches, such as, 1 Cor. i 10 *I beseech you by the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ that there be no divisions among you*; and

and which bid us *mark them that cauſe Diviſions among us and avoid them*, Rom. xvi. 17. and alſo which *Schiſms* and *Diviſions* to be Fruits of the *fleſh*, as particularly, 1 Cor. iii. 3. and St. *Jude* 19. and in a word, which requires us *to indeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*, Epheſ. iv. 3. *to be of one mind*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. and to *ſtand faſt in one Spirit, with one* Mind, *Phil* i. 27. all which was ſpoke to Chriſtians as they were Members of *particular Churches*, to oblige them by no means to *diſſent* and *ſeparate* from thoſe Churches, unleſs they were forced to it by *juſt* and *manifeſt* Reaſons; and methinks 'tis a moſt *pathetical* Conjuration of the Apoſtle, *If there by any Conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, being of one accord, and of one mind*, Phil. ii. 1, 2. which Exhortation he gives them as they were a *particular Corporation* of *Chriſtians* under *Epaphroditus* their *Head* and *Biſhop*, by whom he ſent this Epiſtle to them. The ſence of all which is, to oblige us not to *diſunite* our ſelves from the Church of which we are Members, ſo long as we are permitted to continue in her *Communion* without doing any thing that is *apparently unlawful*. Or if we ſuppoſe thoſe *Diviſions* which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, and forbids, to be meant of *Factions* within the Church without actual *Separation*, then much more is *Separation*, which is the *higheſt* Faction and Breach of Unity, to be lookt upon as *wicked* and *unlawful*. So that for Men to *ſeparate* from the Churches Communion upon little *Piques*, uncertain *Scruples*, and blind *Prejudices*, is a very

great and *dangerous* Sin against the Gospel; 'tis a manifest *Violation* of the Laws of *Union*, and an open *Rebellion* against Christ's Authority in his Church. And being so, it is no wonder that in the *purest* Ages of Christianity 'twas *branded* with such an *infamous* Character. For thus in the 31 Canon of the Apostles, 'tis called *Ambition* and *Tyranny*, and condemned by *Ignatius*, the Disciple of St. *John*, as the Ἀρχὴ κακῶν, or Original of Evils, *Ep. ad Smyrn.* as a Sin that shuts men out of the Kingdom of Heaven, *Ep. ad Philad.* and by the *African Code* 'tis stiled a *destructive*, *sacrilegious* Sin, *Con. Carth.* &c. *Can.* 100. and St. *Cyprian* makes it to be more *Heinous* than the Sin of the *Lapsi* that offered Sacrifice to Idols to avoid Persecution, and to be such a Sin as *Martyrdom* it self would not *expiate*, *de Unit. Eccles.* and *Dionysius Alexandrinus* affirms, That to suffer *Martyrdom* rather than make a *Schism* in the Church, is as Glorious an Act as to die refusing to offer Sacrifice to Idols, *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib.* 6. And as they thus *decry* Schism, so on the contrary they *extol* Union, as the *Nurse* of *Piety*, the *Fence* of *Religion*, the *Quintessence* and *Extract* of all *Christian Vertue.*

And indeed, 'tis to the *Unity* of the Members of the Church among themselves, that the Scripture attributes their *Growth* and *Improvement* in Piety and Vertue. For thus the Apostle tells us, not only that *Charity* (or a mutual Agreement among Church-Members) *edifies*, 1 *Cor.* viii. 1. but also assures us that the whole Church or Collection of Members becomes an *holy Temple*, and *an Habitation of God*, by being συναρμολογουμένη, *compacted*, and

and closely *united* together in all its Parts, *Ephes.* ii. 21, 22. and *Ephes.* iv. 16. he tells us, that the Church *increases* or *improves unto the edifying it self in love by being closely compacted and united in all its parts and members*; and *Col.* ii. 19. he tells us, that 'tis not only from its *Union with Christ*, and those nourishing Influences that are thereby conveyed from him, that the Church *increases with the increase of God*, but also from its *being knit together*, or firmly united in all its Parts. And if *Union* be so necessary to the Growth and Perfection of the *Church*, it can be no less necessary to the Improvement of each *particular* Member of it. For,

1. Schisms and unnecessary *Breaches* of Church Communion do Naturally *sour* the Tempers of men, and render them *peevish* and *uncharitable* towards one another. For the *separating Party* must in their own Vindication be forced to *accuse* those they separate from of something that may be foul enough to *justifie* their *Separation*, and what they want in *Reality* they must make up in *Pretence*, otherwise they will be lookt upon as *peevish* and *obstinate* Schismaticks; and then the *Party* they *separate from*; will be sure to deem it self *injured*, and in its own Defence be forced to *recriminate*, and this will alarm the Separatists into *greater* Heats and Animosities, and so like two Flints *dash'd* together, they will be continually *sparkling* and *spitting fire* at one another, till they have *kindled* the quarrel into an *inquenchable* Flame. Whereas had the Dividers but *continued* their Communion, all this might have been prevented, and they might have easily continued their *Charity*, though

though they had retained the *Opinions* upon which they ſeparated. For had they but exerciſed that *Modeſty* and *Goodneſs* as not to prefer their own *private* Sentiments before the *Reaſon* and *Peace* of the whole Church, they would either have kept their Opinions to *themſelves*, or at leaſt not have *advanced* them into *Principles* of Separation; and ſo by *continuing* in Communion with that Party of the Church from whence they *diſſented* in *Opinion*, they would have declared that they judged their Errors to be *tolerable*. For by *not ſeparating* from them, they would have plainly manifeſted that they ſaw Reaſon enough to *unite* upon the ſcore of thoſe Points in which they were *agreed*, but none to *diſunite* upon the ſcore of theſe in which they *differed*; and conſequently, that they had a great deal of Reaſon to *love*, but none to *hate* and *perſecute* one another; and whilſt they *mutually* retained this good Opinion of one another, 'tis very unlikely that their *little Differences* ſhould cauſe any great Breaches in their Charity. Schiſm therefore being ſo deſtructive to our *Charity*, which is one of the leading Vertues of our Religion, muſt needs have a very *malevolent* Aſpect upon our *Perſeverance*. For he that from a *charitable* Temper, relapſes into a *ſpiteful* and *rancorous* one, is Apoſtatiſed from *one half* of the Religion of a Chriſtian, and hath exchanged one of the *faireſt* Graces of a *Saint*, for one of the *blackeſt* Characters of a *Devil*. But then,

2. Schiſms, or unneceſſary *Breaches* of Church-Communion, do naturally lead to the *fouleſt Hypocriſies*. For he that *ſeparates* from a Church is a very bad man, if he hath not a great *Opinion* of, and

and *Zeal* for those things upon which he separates; which *Zeal* of his, when once he is *actually* separated, will be much more *inflamed*, and that both by the *Opposition* of the *Church* he is separated *from*, and the *Instigation* of the *Sect* he is separated to; and so by Degrees that *holy* Fervour which should *animate* him in the *plain* and *unquestionable* Duties of Religion, will *blaze* into a *fierce* Contention for those *little* Opinions that constitute the Sect he is ingaged in. For our Nature being *finite* and *limited* in all its Operations, it is impossible we should operate divers ways at once with *equal* Force and Vigour; but whatsoever Time and Attendance we *bestow* upon *one* thing, we must necessarily *substract* from *another*. Now whilst we continue in a *peaceable* Communion with the Church, we have no other use for our *Zeal*, but to *inspire* our Devotions, to *quicken* our Vertues, and to *fight against* our Sins with it, and this all men agree is the best Use it can be put to; but when once we are entred into a *schismatical Separation*, we shall find other Employment for it; namely, to *quarrel* at Ecclesiastical Constitutions, to *wrangle* about Modes and Circumstances of Worship, and *contend* for our *trifling* Speculations and Opinions. Which must necessarily *weaken* it in its *nobler* Operations, and render it more *remiss* and *indifferent* in the *great* and *indispensible* Duties of Religion; and whilst 'tis thus *impertinently* busied in *picking Straws*, and contending about *Mint* and *Cummin*, to be sure it must more or less neglect the *great* and *weighty* things of the Law; and so proportionably as it grows *warmer* and *warmer* about little Opinions and Cir-

Circumstances of Religion, it will be continually waxing *cooler* and *cooler* in the *necessary* and *essential* Duties of it; till at last 'tis wholly degenerated into *Peevishness* and *Faction*, and dwindled away into a *fierce* Contention about Trifles. That this is the natural Effect of Schism appears by too many woful Experiments. For how many Instances of men are there among our selves, who had once an honest Zeal for the *Life* and *Substance* of Religion, and made great Conscience of *living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, but afterwards becoming *Bigots* to such a *Sect* or *Party*, have diverted the *Stream* of their Zeal into another *Channel*, where its irregular *Current* hath only made a *Noise*, and fill'd the world with a *loud* and *turbulent* Clamour about *little* things, but as to those *great* and *important* Duties upon which their Happiness depends hath been profoundly *mute* and *indifferent*; and so their Religion, like an *Hectick* Body, hath by degrees been consumed by its own *Heats*, whilst that Zeal and Fervour which should *move* and *animate* it, hath been converted into its *Disease*, and wholly evaporated into *Faction* and *Turbulency*; and whilst their Zeal is thus misimployed about the *little* Trifles of their Sect, and they are ready to *start* at an *innocent* Ceremony, and to *swoon* at the sight of an *indifferent* Mode and Appendage of Religion, as if they were afraid lest it should *infect* them at a distance, they can *swallow* Camels though they *strain* at these Gnats, and *glibly* digest the *grossest* Immoralities.

3. And lastly, *Schisms* and unnecessary *Breaches* of Church-Communion, do naturally lead to *downright*

right Irreligion. For when once a Man departeth from an *eſtabliſhed* Church without a *juſt* Warrant, there is nothing can *confine* or ſet Shores to him, he hath no Principles that can ſtay him any where, or *ſet* any Meaſures of *Changing* to him. For when upon a meer *Humour* or *Fancy* he hath run from the Church to *ſuch* a Sect, what ſhould hinder him from running from *that* Sect to *another*, and ſo on from *Sect* to *Sect*, till he hath *run* himſelf *out* of all Religion? He is *rolling* down a *ſteep* Hill, and hath no Principles to *ſtay* him, ſo that 'tis impoſſible to determine *whither* he will *go*, or *where* he will *ſtop*; he may perhaps ſtay at *ſuch* an Opinion, but if he doth, it is *by chance*, and if he doth *not*, he will be *endleſly* rolling from one Opinion to another, and ſhifting his *Church* as oft as his *Almanack*. For Schiſm is a large *Labyrinth*, that naturally divides and ſubdivides into *infinite* Paths and Allies, wherein a Man may *wander* to Eternity, and the *farther* he goes, the more he may *loſe himſelf*; and then when he hath wandred a while out of *one* wild Opinion into *another*, and ſtill perceives that the farther he *goes*, the more he is *diſſatisfied*, 'tis a thouſand to one if he doth not at laſt *ſuſpect* and *queſtion* all Religion, as if the whole were an *intricate* maze of *abſurd* or *doubtful* Opinions, contriv'd on purpoſe to *amuſe* mens minds, and *intangle* them in endleſs Perplexities. For the *Schiſmatick*, as I ſhewed before, doth commonly place a great Part of his Religion in *that* Opinion upon which he *divides* and *ſeparates*, ſo that if once he be *diſſatisfied* with *this*, as in all probability he will quickly be, having begun already to *ring Changes*, he will be under

under a great Temptation to miſtruſt the *whole* Religion to be as great an Impoſture as he finds this *darling Opinion* is, eſpecially after he hath run through ſeveral *Sects* of Opinions, and finds them at laſt to be all *Deluſions*. For as *weak* Heads, when they perceive the *Battlements* ſhake, are apt to ſuſpect that the *Foundations* are *infirm*; ſo *weak* Underſtandings will be ready to ſuſpect even the *fundamental* Principles of Religion, when once they perceive thoſe *darling Notions* totter which they have confidently preſum'd to ſuperſtruct upon it. Upon this Account therefore I make no doubt, but that the *Atheiſm* of this preſent Age, is very much owing to its *Sects* and *Diviſions*. For how many woful Examples have we of perſons who had once a great deal of *Zeal* for, and *Satisfaction* in Religion, that upon their *cauſleſs* Defection from the Churches Communion have run from *Sect* to *Sect*, and from one *extravagant* Opinion to another, till being at laſt convinced of the *Cheats* and *Impoſtures* of them all, they have diſcarded *Religion* it ſelf, and made their laſt Reſort into *Atheiſm* and *Infidelity*? Since therefore *Schiſm* hath ſo many *Miſchiefs* attending it, and ſuch as do manifeſtly *endanger* our *Perſeverance* in Religion, it highly concerns us, as we would hold out to the End in the Courſe of our Chriſtian Warfare, to keep cloſe to the *Communion* of the *Church*.

VI. To our *final* Perſeverance in the Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould not *ſtint* our *Progreſs* in Religion (out of a *fond* Opinion that we are good *enough* already) to any determinate *Degrees* or *Meaſures* of Goodneſs. For

For thus we are injoined not only to *have Grace*, but ſtill to be *growing in it*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. and not only to *do the work of the Lord*, but to *abound in the doing it*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. and not only to *walk in all well-pleaſing to God*, but *to abound in ſo doing more and more*, 1 Theſ. iv. 1. *to forget what is behind*, i. e. the Degrees of Virtue and Goodneſs we have *already* attained, and to be ſtill *preſſing forward to the mark of our high Calling*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. The ſenſe of all which is, that we ſhould not *limit* our ſelves to our *preſent* Attainments, out of a *ſlothful* Opinion that we are good *enough* already, but that we ſhould ſtill be proceeding on to *farther* and *farther* Degrees of Perfection. For Holineſs is every where injoined in the Goſpel in *unlimited* and *indefinite* Meaſures, and our Progreſs in it hath no other *Boundary* than the farthermoſt Degree of *poſſible* Perfection. An Injunction which will keep us for ever ſufficiently *imployed*, and oblige us to Eternity to be ſtill *aſpiring* beyond our *preſent* Attainments; and the *Neglect* of this is doubtleſs the Occaſion of many a Man's *final* Miſcarriage. They aim at no more than what is *abſolutely* neceſſary to *remove* them from the Brink of Eternal Perdition, and if they can but ſo far *prevail* againſt their *Sin*, as to arrive at the *lowermoſt* Degree of Sincere *Obedience*, and but juſt paſs the Line which ſeparates between a *bad* and *good* State, that ſo if they die as they are, they may hope to *eſcape* Hell, and *arrive* at ſome *Degree* of Happineſs, they think they have very fairly acquitted themſelves. But now beſides that *Line* which parts thoſe two States of Sin and Grace is not ſo *eaſily diſcernible*, but that you may very

very probably be *deceived*, and *imagine* that you are got over it into the State of Grace, whileſt you are yet upon the *Frontiers* of the Dominion of Sin, and ſo may periſh at laſt at the very *Mouth* of your *Harbour*; beſides that, 'tis a fearful Sign that you are *yet in your Sins*, that you deſign no *farther* but *juſt* to eſcape that *Everlaſting Ruine* that attends them, which plainly ſhews that the *Fear of Hell* is the *Soul* of your Religion, and that there is not the leaſt Degree of true *Love to God* intermingled with it, without which your Religion will be altogether *inſignificant*; beſides all this I ſay, while you reſt in ſuch an *imperfect* State of *Goodneſs*, you dwell in the next *Neighbourhood* to a *ſinful* State, and ſo are in continual danger of *returning* thither again For how is it poſſible you ſhould be *ſafe*, while you ſtay upon the *Brink* of that miſerable State out of which you are but juſt *emerged* and *recovered*, and have ſo many ſtrong Inclinations *within* you, concurring with the numberleſs Temptations *without* you, to thruſt you headlong *back again* into it? So that if you would be *ſecure*, it is not ſufficient for you juſt to *get out* of your ſinful State, and ſtay *there*, but you muſt ſtill be *removing* farther and farther from it, by *proceeding on* ſtill to farther Degrees of Perfection. For you muſt conſider that there is a vaſt Diſtance between a State of *ſincere*, and of *confirmed* Goodneſs, and that all the while you are paſſing on from the *one* to the *other*, you are more or leſs in Danger of *Relapſing*. For you have been *ſincerely* good, ever ſince your firſt Entrance into a *firm* and *hearty* Reſolution of Amendment; but alas ſince *that*, how many times have you been

been in danger of relapſing into your old *ſinful* Courſes again? What ſtrong Contentions have there been between your *Fleſh* and your *Spirit*, your *bad* Inclinations, and your *pious* Reſolutions? And though the *later* hath been moſt *commonly* victorious, yet how often hath it been *yielding*, yea, how often hath it been *vanquiſht*? Inſomuch that if you had not by a *quick* Repentance *revived* it *immediately*, it had been *dead* long ſince, and you had been as much *enſlaved* to your Luſts as ever. And from theſe dangers you will never be *wholly* free, till you have *utterly* extinguiſht your vicious Inclinations, and *inwrought* all the Vertues of Religion into your Natures; and then you will be arrived to that *confirmed* State of Goodneſs, from which it will be *morally* impoſſible for you to *revolt*. If therefore you would *ſecure* your Perſeverance to the *End*, beware you do not *limit* your ſelves in the *Way*; for though if you die but juſt *ſincerely* good, you ſhall certainly eſcape Hell; yet in all probability you will not be long *ſincerely* good, unleſs you be *ſomething more*; that is, unleſs you proceed in the *Degrees* of Vertue, and do more and more *ſuppreſs* your *evil*, and *improve* your *good* Diſpoſitions and Inclinations. For ſo long as there remains in you any *Luſt* to evil, you will be in Danger of being *betrayed* by it; and the *ſtronger* that Luſt is, the *more* it threatens your deſtruction. So that you can never be *ſafe*, ſo long as you have an Enemy *alive* in your Breaſt, and whilſt you reſt in any Attainment on this ſide the *confirmed* State of Vertue, in which there is an *utter* Extinction of all *evil* Inclinations, you are more or leſs in *Danger*, proportionably

ſs you are more or leſs *diſtant* from that *happy* Period.

VII. To our *final* Perſeverance, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould frequently entertain our ſelves with the proſpect of our *Mortality*, and indeavour to *compoſe* our ſelves before-hand into a good *Poſture* of *dying*. For thus we are called upon in this our *militant* State *to conſider our latter end*, Deut. xxxii. 29. and by the Examples of the beſt men are invited *to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom*, Pſalm xc. 12. and *to wait till our change comes*, Job xiv. 14. to which End we are put in mind that *here we have no abiding City*, Heb xiii. 14. and *that 'tis appointed for all men once to die*, Heb. ix. 27. and *that our life is even as a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vaniſhes away*, James iv. 14. and to this purpoſe the Apoſtle applies this Conſideration, 1 *Cor.* vii. 29, 30, 31. Now *This I ſay, brethren*, (that is, of our Abode and Continuance here, upon which he exhorts us to *compoſe* our ſelves to a great *Indifferency* as to the things of this World,) *it remains that both they that have Wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not, and they that buy as though they poſſeſſed not, and they that uſe this world as not abuſing it, for the faſhion of this world paſſes away*, *i.e.* ſince your Time here is very *ſhort*, indeavonr before-hand to *looſen* your ſelves from this World, and to put your ſelves into a fit Poſture of *leaving* it; for 'tis but a ſhort *Scene* that will quickly be *ſhifted*, and then there will an *eternal* State of things *ſucceed*.

And

And indeed since to *die well*, is the *last* Act and *final* consummation of our Christian Warfare, it musts needs highly concern us to *arm* and *prepare* our selves for it before hand, lest we lose the blessed *Prize* by *stumbling* just at the *Goal*, and after a long *Voyage* miscarry for ever within *Sight* of *Harbour*. For in the hour of Death we throw our last *Cast* for an Eternity of Happiness or Misery, and how much are we concerned to throw that *well*, upon which so vast a *Stake* depends? O! 'Tis a *serious* thing to *die*, to pass this *dark* Entry of Eternity, through which as we go *right* or *wrong* we are *made* or *undone* for ever. For to carry us *right* through, 'tis not a few *Death-bed* Sorrows, or *good* Wishes, a few *extorted* Promises, or *forced* Resolutions, or *frightful* Prayers, or *Lord have mercy upon us*, will serve the turn; O! no, it is an *expensive* Passage, which we shall never be able to *defray*, unless we carry along with us a *large Stock* of spiritual Preparations. We shall have need of a *strong* and *active* Faith, of a Mind well furnished with *wise* Considerations, of a *deep*, a *large*, and a *tried* Repentance, an *unrestrained* Charity, a *confirmed* Patience, a *profound* Submission to the Will of God, and a *well-grounded* Hope of a blessed Eternity. For without all these together, we shall be very *ill-accoutred* to die, and run a dreadful *Hazard* of miscarrying for ever. And these are such things as do not usually spring up like *Mushromes* in a Night, or in the few *disturbed* Moments of a *dying* Time, but do ask a much *larger* and *serener* Season to *grow* and *ripen* in. So that if we mean to *die well*, and so come off *victoriously* in this *last Act* of our

ſpiritual Warfare, we muſt now, while we are well, be frequently entertaining our Meditations in the *Charnel-houſe*, and read *Lectures* to our ſelves upon the *Skeletons* and *Death-heads* there, thoſe Emblems and Repreſentations of our approaching Mortality, and from them take ſuch lively *Pictures* of the King of Terrours, as may render his *grim* Viſage and *fearful* Addreſſes ſo familiar to us, as that our Thoughts may be before-hand accuſtomed to the manner of his *Approaches*; with what an *Army* of Diſeaſes he is wont to lay *Siege* to the *Fort* of our Life, how in Deſpight of all the Reſiſtances of Nature, he *plants* and *quarters* them in our Veins or our Arteries, our Stomachs or our Bowels, and from thence *infeſts* us all over with continual Anguiſh and Pain; how when he hath *tired* and *exhauſted* us with his continued *Batteries*, and worn out our Strength with a ſucceſſion of *wearifom* Nights to *ſorrowful* Days, he at laſt *ſtorms* the Soul out of all the *Out-works* of Nature, and forces it to *retire* into the Heart; and how when he hath marked us for dead with a Baptiſm of *clammy* and *fatal* Sweats, he ſummons our weeping Friends to aſſiſt him to *grieve* and *vex* us with their *parting* Kiſſes and *ſorrowful* Adieus; and how at length, when he is weary of Tormenting us any more, he *ruſhes* into our Hearts, and with a few Mortal Pangs and Convulſions, *tears* the Soul from thence, and *turns* it out to ſeek its Fortune in the *wide* World of Spirits, where 'tis either *ſeized* on by Devils, and carried away to their *dark* Priſons of *Sorrow* and *Deſpair*, there to languiſh out its life in a diſmal *Expectation* of that dreadful Day wherein

wherein it must change its *bad* Condition for a *worse*; or be *conducted* by Angels to some *blessed* Abode, there to remain in *unspeakable* Pleasure and Tranquillity, till 'tis Crowned with a *glorious* Resurrection. Now since 'tis *most certain* that we must all *one* time or *other* experience these things, but *most uncertain* how *soon*; how much doth it concern us to *think* of them before-hand, and to forecast such *Provisions* and *Preparations* for them, as that whensoever they happen we may not be *surprized*. For besides that the frequent Meditation of death will *familiarize* its Terrours to us, so that whenever it comes, our Minds which have been so long accustomed to *converse* with it, will be much less *startled* and *amazed* at it; besides that, it will *wean* us from the *inordinate* Desire and *over-eager* Prosecution of the things of this World, which, as I told you before, are the Snares with which our Vices do too often *intangle* us; besides all this, I say, it will put us upon laying in a *Store* of spiritual *Provisions* against that great Day of *Expence*. For he that often considers the *dreadful* Approaches, the *concomitant* Terrours, and the *momentous* Issues and Consequents of Death, must be strangely *stupified* if he be not thereby vigorously *excited* to *fore-arm* and *fortifie* himself with all those *Graces* and *Defences* that are necessary to render it *easie*, *safe* and *prosperous*.

VIII. To our *final* Perseverance in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that in order to the putting our selves into a good *Posture* to die, we should *discharge* our Consciences of all the *Reliques* and *Remains* of our past *guilt*. For so

we are commanded to take care *that our hearts be sprinkled from an evil conscience*, Heb x. 22. and *to hold faith and a good conscience*, 1 Tim. i. 19. and *to make this our rejoycing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world*, 2 Cor. i. 12. In a word, *to live in all good conscience*, Acts xxiii. 1. and *to have a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards men*, Acts xxiv, 16. Which though they are *General* Duties, do necessarily imply this *Particular*, that we should very *nicely* and *curiously* examine our Consciences, those faithful *Records* and *Registers* of our Actions, and where-ever we find the least *Item* of an *uncancelled* Guilt, immediately *cross* it *out* by a hearty *Sorrow* for, and moral *Revocation* of it. For notwithstanding we may have in the *general* repented of all our past Sins, yet there are some Sins, which, notwithstanding we re-act no more, do leave a *lasting* Guilt upon the Mind, which nothing can *cancel* but our *actual* revoking and *unsinning* them. As supposing that I have heretofore either by my bad *Counsels* or *Example* seduced other men into wicked Courses; it is not sufficient for the Expiation of my Fault, that I *my self* abstain from those wicked Courses for the future, but I must indeavour to *undo* the Mischief which I have done to *others* by them, and by a solemn *Recantation* of my past Follies, by *Persuasion* and good *Counsel*, and the Application of all other *pious* and *prudent* Means, indeavour to *reduce* those whom I have formerly *perverted*. For till I have done this, I *wilfully* permit the mischievous *Effect* of my Sin to *remain*; and if when I have *wounded* another, I suffer him

to

to *periſh* without taking any care of his *Cure*, I am guilty of his *Murder* though I never wound him *more*. Suppoſe again, that I have injured another by any malicious *Slander* or *Calumny*; it is not enough to acquit me of the Guilt of it, that I *ceaſe* to *ſcandalize* him for the future, but I muſt alſo indeavour by a free *Retractation* to *vindicate* his injured Name from the ill *Surmiſes* of thoſe to whom I have *aſperſt* him; for ſo long as his *Reputation* ſuffers through my *not Retracting* the Calumnies I have caſt upon it, I wilfully perſiſt to *defame* and *calumniate* him, and ſo long the *Guilt* of it muſt *ſtick* and *abide* upon my Conſcience. Once more, ſuppoſe I have injured another in his *Eſtate*, either by *Theft* or *Fraud*, or *Oppreſſion*, it will not be ſufficient to acquit me, that for the future I *forbear* defrauding, forcing, or ſtealing from him any more, but, if it be in my Power, I muſt make *Reſtitution* of all that I have wrongfully *deprived* him of; and that to *himſelf*, if he be *living*, or if not, to thoſe that ſucceed him in his *Rights*, and for want of *ſuch*, to the *Poor*, who by God's Donation have the Propriety of all ſuch *Wefts* and *Strays* as have no other Owner ſurviving. For it's certain that my *wrongful* Seizure of what is another mans, doth not *alienate* his *Right* to it, ſo that he hath the ſame Right to it while I *keep* it from him, as he had at firſt when I *took* it from him; and conſequently, till I *reſtore* it back to him, I *continue* to wrong him of it, and my *detaining* it is a continued *Repetition* of that *Fraud*, or *Theft*, or *Oppreſſion* by which I wrongfully ſeized it; and whilſt I thus *continue* the Sin, 'tis impoſſible but the Guilt of it muſt ſtill *abide*

upon me. In theſe Caſes therefore it concerns us to be very *nice* and *curious* in examining our *Accounts*, to ſee if there be any of theſe *Scores* yet *uncancelled*, any of theſe bad *Effects* of our Sin yet *remaining*. For if any ſuch matter appear in our *Accounts*, it concerns us as much as our everlaſting Intereſt amounts to, to uſe all preſent Care and Diligence to *diſcharge* it, that ſo before Death ſummons us to give up our Accounts to the great *Auditor* of the World, all *Scores* between him and us may be *even'd* and *adjuſted*. And indeed if we would be ſafe, it vaſtly imports us to leave as little as may be to do upon a *Death-bed*; for that is moſt commonly a very *improper* State for religious Action; ſince, for all we know, we may be *diſtracted* in it by a *Feaver*, or *ſtupified* by an *Apoplexy*, or *deprived* of the Uſe of Reaſon by the inſufferable Torments of a *Stone*; either of which will render us incapable of *every thing*, but *Dying*. Or, if neither of theſe ſhould happen, yet to be ſure a *dying* State will bring Work *enough* with it; *Sorrows* and *Care* enough, *Fears* and *Impatiencies* enough, to *exerciſe* all our Vertue, and *imploy* all our Reaſon. So that if we carry with us to our Death-bed any *Item* or *Relique* of *uncancell'd* Guilt, 'tis a thouſand to one but in the *Hurry* of dying we ſhall leave it *uncancell'd*, and be arreſted for it by the Divine Juſtice when we come into Eternity. Wherefore, as we would prevent this *fatal* Iſſue of our Chriſtian Warfare, it concerns us now we are *well* to make a *diligent* Inſpection into our Conſciences, to ſee if there yet remains any old *Reckonings* of Guilt *undiſcharged* by us; and if there be, not to give *reſt* to our Eyes, nor

ſlumber

ſlumber to our Eye-lids, till by an actual *unſinning* and Revocation of the Facts, we have totally *croſſed* and *diſcharged* them. But then becauſe many of theſe may ſlip out of our Mind, and ſo be paſt Recovery,

IX. To the happy *Concluſion* of this our Chriſtian Warfare, 'tis alſo neceſſary that to *Compenſate*, ſo far as we are able, for theſe *Reliques* of Guilt in us, we ſhould take care to *redeem* the time we have formerly miſpent in *ſinful* Courſes, by being *doubly* diligent in the Exerciſe of all the contrary *Vertues*, and the doing all the contrary *Good* we are able. For of all the *outward* Bleſſings that God affords us, our *Time* is incomparably the moſt *precious* and *ineſtimable*; and therefore though he gives us his other Bleſſings in great *Variety*, and provides for us a *plentiful* Choice of Meats, Drinks, and Raiment, yet in the Diſtribution of our Time he ſeems to be more *ſparing* and *ſtreight-handed*; for he gives it not to us in *Rivers*, but *Drop* by *Drop*, and *Minute* after *Minute*, ſo that we can never enjoy *two* Moments *together*, but when-ever he gives us *one*, he always takes away *another*. And yet, good God! what *Waſte* do we make of theſe precious Drops of which thou art ſo *nice* and *ſparing*? How great a part of it do we conſume in our *Childhood* upon the indifferent Vanities of *Nuts* and *Rattles*, and afterwards upon the much more *ridiculous* and *unreaſonable* ones of our *vicious*, *profuſe*, and *extravagant* appetites? So that by that time we come to a *ſerious* Proſecution of the great End of our Beings, the *main* part of our time is uſually *elapſed* beyond revocation. How much therefore doth

it

it concern us, after we have ſo *prodigally* ſquandered away the *greateſt* part of the Treaſure of our Time, to make the beſt Improvement of the *ſmall* Remainder? That ſo we may at leaſt *Morally* recover, that which is *Phyſically* irrecoverable. For though we cannot cauſe the *paſt* Minutes we have ill ſpent to be *preſent* again, yet we can *redouble* our Diligence for the future, and thereby render every *one* Minute *to come* equivalent to every *two* that are *paſt*. For by a *double* diligence we may live as much in *one* Day, as we can in *two* by a *ſingle*, and conſequently, by *doubly* improving that Part of our time which is yet good and *to come*, we may *morally* retrieve that part which is *loſt* and *gone*.

This therefore the Goſpel requires at our hands, that after we have lived out a great part of our time to no purpoſe, we ſhould from thenceforth live *much* in a *little* while, and retrieve our *paſt* Negligence by our *future* Diligence, and *redeem* the Time we have ſpent upon our Luſts, by exerting the contrary Vertues more *vigorouſly* for the future; that the more *prophane* we have been for the time paſt, the more *devout* we ſhould be for the time to come; that the more we have abounded heretofore in *Frauds* and *Oppreſſions*, the more we ſhould abound hereafter in *Charity* and *Alms*; that the more *induſtrious* we have been to *ſeduce* and *debauch* men, the more *zealous* we ſhould be to *reduce* and *reclaim* them: and by our future *Candor* and *Charitable* Conſtruction of men, indeavour to *compenſate* for the Malice of our paſt *Slanders* and *Defamations*. Thus *Epheſ.* v. 28. *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more*; ay, but that

that is not enough, but we must also endeavour to *redeem* his past Thefts by a more *vigorous* Exercise of the contrary Vertue for the future; *but rather let him labour, working with his own hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.* So also, *Dan.* iv. 27. *Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, i. e.* whereas for the Time past the Course of thy Life hath very much abounded with *Cruelty* and *Injustice*, do thou now indeavour to *redeem* the guilt of it, (for so the *Hebrew Verb* signifies,) by exerting more *vigorously* the contrary Vertues, *viz.* of *Justice* to *all*, and of *Mercy* to the *poor* and *afflicted.* And to this purpose S. *Paul*'s Example is proposed to our Imitation, who, because for the Time past he had been a great *Persecutor* of Christianity, did for the future labour *more abundantly* than any other Apostle to *advance* and *propagate* it, 1 *Cor.* xv. 9, 10. The Observance of which Rule is highly necessary to the reducing this our Warfare to a prosperous Issue. For as I told you before, there are many Sins which after we have forsaken the Practice of them, do *stick* such a guilt upon the Conscience, as without our *undoing* them, so far as we are able, is not to be *wiped off*; such as wicked *Counsel*, malicious *Detraction*, and unjust *Gain*, all which we are bound, so far as 'tis in our Power, not only to *avoid*, but actually to *revoke.* But alas! there are many of these which in a long Course of Sin are utterly *forgotten* by us, and consequently are past *Revocation*, and in this Case all we can do to take off the Guilt of them, is in the general Course of our Lives to *abound* in the Practice of the *contrary* Vertues,

Vertues, and to do the utmost Service we are able to the *Souls*, and *good Names*, and *Bodies* of men. For *Charity*, saith the Apostle, *shall cover a multitude of sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. that is, when it appears by the *abundance* of our *Charity*, that we would *abolish* and *repair* all the Injuries we have done, if it were in our Power, God in this Case will accept the *Will* for the *Deed*, and deal as *mercifully* by us as if we had *actually* done it. For if it appear in his Sight that we *would* do it if we *could*, we are in his Account as truly *obedient* to him as if we had actually *performed* it, and consequently shall be dealt with by the same Proportions of Mercy. But 'tis only an *extraordinary* Charity that can evidence this; since what is *ordinary* we are obliged to though we had no past *Injuries* to abolish; but to *ensure* our Reconciliation with God, it is requisite that we should evidence to him our *sincere* willingness, to do not only what we *should have* been obliged to if we had *not* been *injurious*, but also what we *are* obliged to since we *have* been injurious. Now as *Actual Reparation*, so far as we are able, is necessary to evidence this, when we *remember* the Injuries we have done, so an *extraordinary Charity* is no less necessary to evidence this, when we have forgotten them. And this I suppose is the meaning of that *Parallel* Passage of S. *James*, *chap.* v. 20. *He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*, *i. e.* by such an *illustrious* Act of Charity to the *Soul* of his Brother, he shall obtain Pardon of God for many of those *forgotten* Injuries which he hath formerly done, and is now no *otherwise* able to repair. So that

that if we would make *ſure* Work of our Chriſtian Warfare, and *aſcertain* its being *finally* Crowned with Succeſs; as in *general* we muſt indeavour to *redeem* the paſt time we have ſpent in vicious Courſes by *abounding* in the Practice of the *contrary* Vertues; ſo in *particular*, if for the time paſt we have lived in any of thoſe *injurious* Courſes which do naturally fix a more *laſting* Guilt upon the Mind, we muſt take care not only to repair, ſo far as we are able, thoſe Injuries we *remember*, but alſo to wipe off the Guilt of thoſe we have *forgotten*, by an *extraordinary* Charity and Beneficence, by laying hold of all *Opportunities* to do Good, and indeavouring in our ſeveral Stations, according as God hath inabled us to *reduce* the Souls, *relieve* the Bodies, and *vindicate* the Reputation of our Brethren.

X. And laſtly, To our *final* Perſeverance in well-doing, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould labour after a *Rational* and *well-grounded Aſſurance* of Heaven. I put this in the *laſt* Place, becauſe 'tis uſually the *laſt* attained, and is not to be preſently *expected* and *catch'd at* as ſoon as we are entered into a religious State. For there are a great many Stages of Religion to be paſt, before we can modeſtly expect to arrive at *Aſſurance*. In the *Beginning* of our Religion, when we are juſt *recovered* out of a vicious State, we cannot but be ſenſible, if we do at all underſtand our ſelves, that we are as yet in a great deal of *Danger*, and do *border* ſo very near upon that *bad* State we are eſcaped from, that 'tis almoſt impoſſible to diſtinguiſh whether we are *in* or *out* of it. For though we are fully *purpoſed* and *reſolved* againſt it, yet we

we cannot well divine what will be the *Iſſue* of it. Our *Reſolution* is yet ſo *young*, ſo *raw* and *unexperienced*, and *beſieged* with ſo many powerful counterſtriving Inclinations, that we cannot *confide* in it without great *Folly* and *Preſumption*. For till ſufficient Trial hath been made of it, for all that we know, it may prove to be only a Godly *Mood*, or a ſhort *Lucid Interval* between the *raving* Fits of our Luſt and extravagant Affections, which in a few days perhaps may *return* again, and utterly *alienate* and *diſtract* us from all our *ſober* Counſels, and Purpoſes. And if it ſhould ſo happen, that which we now look upon as our *Cure* and *Recovery*, will prove but an *Intermiſſion* of our Diſeaſe. And when for ſome time we have *tried* our Reſolution, and found that it hath bravely *reſiſted* thoſe Temptations that have hitherto aſſaulted it, yet we cannot *preſently* be reaſonably *aſſured* of it, conſidering the *fickleneſs* and *Inconſtancy* of our Nature. For it may be it hath not been yet aſſaulted on the *weak* ſide, or it hath not been *nick'd* with a *ſeaſonable* Temptation, or it may be we may be more *remiſs* and *careleſs* another time, or more *vehemently inclined* to a vicious Compliance; and then thoſe Temptations which we have *hitherto* conquered, may *captivate* and *ſubdue* us. And if it thus happen, that which we now look upon as an everlaſting *Breach* between us and our Luſts, may prove only a *Pet* or ſhort *Diſtaſte*, and like the Fallings out of Lovers end in the renewing of Love. And till we have made ſome conſiderable Progreſs in the *mortification* of our *ſinful* Inclinations, and the *Acquiſition* of their *contrary* Habits, our Religion will have

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ſo many *Flaws*, *Defects*, and *Imperfections* in it, as will give us great Reaſon, if we have any modeſty in us, to be very *fearful* and *jealous* of it. But ſince without *Sincerity* in Religion we can have no *Title* to Heaven, it hence follows, that without a *clear Senſe* of our Sincerity, we can have no *Aſſurance* of our Title to it; and ſuch a *clear Senſe* as is neceſſary to found ſuch an *Aſſurance* on, is not to be acquired, you ſee, without a *thorough* Trial of our Reſolution in a *long* and *vigorous* Courſe of Religion. So that for men to be immediately *ſnatching* at Aſſurance, as ſoon as ever they are *entred* into a good Life, argues them not to be ſo ſenſible, as they ſhould be, of their own *Imperfection* and *Frailty*; they ought in Modeſty to *expect* a while, and not conclude *too ſoon* for themſelves, till they have made a *thorough* Trial of their Reſolution; and in the mean time to *ſtrive on*, in Hope that by the Bleſſing of God concurring with their *Endeavours*, they ſhall *at laſt* attain ſuch a certain *Senſe* and *Feeling* of their own *Sincerity*, as will be ſufficient to inferr a *firm* and *rational* Aſſurance. For Aſſurance being the Top of Chriſtian Attainment, we muſt aſcend to it *gradually*, by the intermediate Staves and Rounds of a *tried* and *laſting* Obedience, and not *leap up* in an Inſtant before we have taken all the Steps and Degrees that lead thither.

But though we ought not to be too *forward* in our Aſſurance, yet we are bound to labour after it in a *due* and *regular* Way; that is, To perſiſt in our Obedience till we have reduced our *inward* and *outward* Motions to ſuch a *Degree* of Conformity to the *Standard* of the Goſpel, as that

upon

upon comparing *our ſelves* with *it*, we may be able, without *Flattery* or *Preſumption*, to conclude our own *Sincerity* and *Uprightneſs*. I know there is a much *ſhorter* Paſſage to Aſſurance, which ſome of late have pretended to; and that is, by certain unaccountable *Incomes* and *Manifeſtations* of God's Spirit, who, as they pretend, doth immediately *whiſper* and *reveal* to them their Title and Intereſt in Heaven. But this alas! is too much like the *North-Eaſt* Paſſage to the *Indies*, which is *ſhorter* indeed, if it could be found, but ſo very *dangerous*, that I doubt there are but few that *attempt* it but *miſcarry*, and 'tis well if they do not *finally* periſh in the *Diſcovery*. Not that I do in the leaſt doubt but God doth many times *ſuggeſt* and *whiſper* unſpeakable *Comforts* and *Aſſurances* to the Minds of good men; but then it is to be conſidered that this is an *arbitrarious* Gift, which he ſeldom, if ever, beſtows but in *extraordinary* Caſes, when 'tis neceſſary to *encourage* us to ſome great *Work*, or to *ſupport* us under ſome extraordinary *Suffering*. For he is a *wiſe* and *careful* Father of his Children, and knows 'tis much more neceſſary for us to be *good*, than to be *raviſhed* and *tranſported*; and that ſuch *high* Cordials are neither *proper* nor *ſafe* for us but in great *Extremities*; and therefore for us to expect that he ſhould make them our ordinary *Food* and *Entertainment* is an Argument of our Childiſh Ignorance and Preſumption. But though ſuch immediate *Whiſpers* and *Revelations* may ſerve to good Purpoſes in a Pinch of Extremity, yet are they by no means to be *built upon* as the Foundations of our *ordinary*, *ſtanding* Aſſurance. For ſo long

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as there is an evil Spirit *without*, and a disordered Fancy *within* us, that can *imitate* these Whispers, we shall be continually liable, so long as we put Confidence in them, to all the *Cheats* and Impostures of *natural* and *Diabolical* Enthusiasm, and unavoidably mistake many an *Injection* of the Devil, and many a warm *Flush* of Fancy, or brisk *Fermentation* of melancholy Humour, for a *Whisper* and *Testimony* of the Spirit of God, and by this means be often *lull'd* into *false* Confidences and Assurances, which like Golden Dreams will *vanish* when we awake, and leave us miserably *disappointed*. That Assurance therefore which we are to aim at, must be *founded* in the Testimony of a good Conscience, and *inferr'd* from the Sense of our own Integrity and Uprightness.

And this we are commanded to endeavour after; so *Heb.* x. 22. we are bid *to draw near unto God*, ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως, in *Confidence*, or *full assurance of faith*, that is, in a *firm* Persuasion of God's Love to us, and our Interest in his Promises; which Persuasion is to be founded upon an Inward Sense of our having *our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies wash'd with pure water*; and accordingly, *Heb.* vi. 11. *to be diligent in good works, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, i. e.* to be so *diligent* in our Duty as that we may thereby acquire such a full *Assurance* of our Reward as may inable us to *continue* and *hold out* to the End. For S. *John* tells us, that 'tis by the Integrity of our Vertue, and particularly of our *love to one another*, that we are *to assure our hearts before God*, 1 Joh. iii. 14, 19. for, saith he, *ver.* 21. *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confi-*

tence towards God; and for this purpose among others, the same Apostle tells us he *wrote this Catholick Epistle*, that true Christians might *know and be assured that they had eternal life*, 1 *Joh.* v. 13.

From all which 'tis evident, That 'tis our Duty to labour after such an *Assurance* of Heaven, as naturally ariseth from the *clear* and *certain* Sense of our *Sincerity* towards God, and the *firm Belief* of the *Promise* of eternal Life, to which our Sincerity intitles us. For when we are so far *improved* in Religion, as that upon an *impartial* Survey of our selves we can feel our own *Integrity*, and sensibly perceive that our *Intention* is pure, our *Resolution* fix'd, and our *Heart* intirely devoted to God, we may from thence most certainly inferr our *Title* and *Interest* to the Promise of Heaven. So that to the obtaining this *Assurance*, all that we have to do is, so far to *purifie* our Intentions from sinister Aims, and *subdue* our bad Inclination to our Resolution of Obedience, as that when ever we *reflect* upon, and *compare* our selves with the *Rule*, our Conscience may be able without any Diffidence to pronounce us *sincere*; and then we may as *certainly* conclude our Interest in Heaven, as we can that God's Promises are true; and if after we are thus far improved in Religion, we still remain *unassured*, it proceeds not from the Want of *sufficient* Evidence, but either from a *melancholy* Temper, or a *weak* Faith, or a *misinformed* Conscience; and which soever of these is the Cause of it, when that is once removed, we shall as plainly *feel* our own Sincerity, and therein our Interest in Heaven, as we do now our *bodily* Passions.

Passions. And having once attained this Assurance, 'twill *animate* our Hearts with an Heroick Courage against all Temptations, and carry us on with unspeakable *Alacrity* through all the remaining Stages of our Duty; it will *invigorate* our Endeavours, and *wing* our Activity, and make us all *Life* and *Spirit* in the Exercises of our holy *Religion.* And as when the Christian Army, after a tedious march towards the Land of *Canaan*, came within view of the *holy City*, and beheld *afar off* the Towers and Turrets of *Hierusalem*, they were so *Ecstasied* with Joy that they made the Heavens *ring* with triumphant Shouts and Acclamations, and as if that Sight had given *new* Souls to them, ran on upon their Enemies with a Courage that forced Victory where-ever they came; so when a good Man after a long *Progress* from one Degree of Vertue to another, is got so far as that from a certain *Sense* and *Feeling* of his own Sincerity he can discern the *new Hierusalem* above, and his own Interest in it, that blessed Sight will fill him with so much *Joy*, *Courage* and *Alacrity*, that no Temptation for the future will be able to *withstand* or *interrupt* him. So that his Conscience will be always ringing with Acclamations of Victory, and the remainder of this March will be all a *Triumphal Progress* to him; and when he comes to the Conclusion of it, to die, and pass the Gate of this blessed City, the firm *Assurance* which he hath of Admittance, will *dispel* the Fears, *sweeten* the Troubles, and *asswage* the Pangs and Agonies of the *dolorous* Passage. So that he will die, not only with *Peace*, but with *Joy*, and go away into Eternity with *Hallelujahs* in his

Mouth. If therefore we mean to bring this our spiritual Warfare to a *happy* Conclusion, it concerns us now, while we have Opportunity, to labour after a *wise* and *well-grounded* Assurance of Heaven.

SECT. VI.

Containing certain Motives *to press men to the Practice of these Duties of* Perseverance *in the* Christian Warfare.

Having in the foregoing Section described all those Duties which appertain to the *last* Part of our Christian Warfare, to wit, *final Perseverance*; and shewn how effectually they all contribute thereunto, I shall now, according to my former Method, conclude with some *Motives* to *press* and *perswade* men to the Practice of them; all which I shall deduce from the Consideration of the *great* and *urgent* Necessity of our *final* Perseverance, to which those Duties are such necessary Helps and Means. For unless we take in the Assistance of these Duties, in all Probability we shall never be able to *hold out* to the End; and unless we *persevere* to the End, we are guilty of the most *fatal* and *mischievous* piece of Folly in the World. For Consider,

1. If after we have made some *Progress* in Religion, we *wilfully relapse*, we shall *go back* much *faster* than ever we have *proceeded*.

2. If once we *totally relapse*, we shall thereby forfeit all the *Fruit* of our *past* Labour.

3. We

3. We shall forfeit the Fruit of our Labour after we have undergone the *greatest Difficulty* of it.

4. We shall not only forfeit the Fruit of our past Labour, but also render our *Recovery* more *hazardous* and *difficult* than ever.

5. We shall not only render our *future* Recovery more difficult, but also plunge our selves for *the present* into a far more *Guilty* and *Criminal* Condition than ever.

6. We shall not only render our selves for *the present* more guilty, but as a certain Consequence of that, Expose our selves, if we die in our *Apostasie*, to a *Deeper* and more *Dreadful* Ruine.

I. Consider, When once we have *wilfully relapsed*, unless we *immediately* recover, we shall go much *faster back*, than ever we went *forward*. For in the Beginning of our *religious* Progress, we are fain to *sail* for a great while against *Wind and Tide*, against a strong *Gale* of Temptation from without, and a rapid *Stream* of Inclination from within, and while we do thus, we must be contented to get our ground by *Inches*, and move forward by *slow* and *insensible* Degrees; but in all our *wilful Apostasies*, we are carried on *secundo flumine*, with a *full Drift* of Temptation and Inclination. So that if when once we have *wilfully sinn'd* we do not *immediately* check our selves by Repentance, in all Probability we shall be driven farther *back* in a *Day*, than we shall be able to get *forward* in a *Week*. For your Progress in Religion lying *up* Hill, but your Apostasie *down*, you must expect when once you are *falling* to *descend* much *faster* than ever you *ascended*, and to get far sooner

to the *Bottom* again than you can to the *Top*, though you should happen to fall just in the *midway*, and have no farther to the *one* than to the *other*. For 'tis hardly to be imagined what strength a bad Inclination gets by a short *Repast* and *Gratification*; how when it hath been almost *pined away* by a long Abstinence, a Taste of sinful Pleasure will *raise* and *revive* it, and render it as *brisk* and *vigorous* as ever; insomuch that it usually requires a great *many* Acts of Mortification, to re-extinguish that Life and Strength it acquires in *one* short Gratification. For as the fierce *Tyger* after a long Confinement will lie down *tamely* in his Den, and by Degrees lose all his *Fierceness*, and grow *manageable* and *obsequious*, but let him take but one warm Draught of Bloud and his old *savage* Nature immediately *revives*, and he grows as *cruel* and *outragious* as ever; just so it is with our wicked Inclinations, which being reduced from their Excesses, and kept under the close Confinement of a holy Resolution, will by Degrees grow *tame* and *gentle*, and forget the *alluring* Relishes of Sin, but if once we suffer them to *break loose* again, and to come at those sinfull Pleasures from which they have been along while *alienated*, they will soon recover their natural *Wildness*, and become as *head-strong* and *violent* as ever. Wherefore it mightily concerns us to have a great Care of all *wilful Apostasies*, for to be sure your *first* Slip will vehemently incline you to a *second*, and that more vehemently to a *third*, and so, like men that are running *head-long* down Hill, the *farther* you go, the more you will be *preſt forward* by your own Weight, and the harder 'twill be for you

to

to *ſtop* and *recover* your ſelves. So that if you do not *immediately* ſtop, you will by a *few days* ſin loſe back all the ground you have got by *many a Years* Warfare; you will *pull down* more of your Religion by *one* wilful Sin, than you will be able to *repair* again by *many* a vertuous Action; and like ſome *prodigal Drudges*, ſpend more in one *mad Frolick*, than you have earn'd by many a *hard* Days Labour. And if you do thus, 'tis impoſſible you ſhould ever *improve*; for what you *do* in a *Week*, you will *undo* again in a Day, and ſo inſtead of preſſing *forward*, you will dance in a *Circle*, and always *end* where you *begun*. So that unleſs you *go on* and *perſevere* in well-doing, all your Striſe and Warfare againſt Sin will be but like *rolling* of a *Siſyphus*'s Stone, which after you have been a *long while* raiſing to the Top of the Hill, will in a *moment* tumble down again upon you; ſo that either you muſt undergo the *ſame* Pains to raiſe it *again*, or *lie down* under it, and tamely ſuffer your ſelves to be *cruſh'd* into eternal Ruine by it.

II. Conſider, If after we have made ſome Progreſs in Religion we *totally Relapſe*, we thereby forfeit the *Fruit* of all our *paſt* Labour. For ſo God himſelf by the Prophet pronounces in the Caſe, *Ezek.* xviii. 24. *When the Righteous turns away from his Righteouſneſs, and commits iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, ſhall he live? all his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned, in the treſpaſs that he hath treſpaſſed, and in the ſin that he hath ſinned, in them ſhall he die, i. e.* how good ſoever he may have been for the Time *paſt*, if he doth not *perſevere* to the End, but *wilfully relapſe*

into Folly and Wickedness, all the *Vertue* he hath exercised, and all the *Good* he hath done, shall be quite *struck off* from his Accounts, and be never so much as *mentioned* to his Benefit and Advantage, but in that Wickedness whereinto he is *fall*n he shall as certainly perish as if all his Life had been a *continued* Act, or *uninterrupted* Course of Iniquity. So also, *Heb.* x. 38. *if any shall draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* And indeed this is a most necessary Effect of our *Apostasie*; for by *falling off* from our Christian Course, we put our selves *back* into the same State and Condition wherein we were before we *enter'd* upon it; and the *Effect* of all those good things which we did from the Time we *enter'd upon*, to the Time we *deserted* it, will be so *voided* and *abolished*, that there will not remain the least *Trace* or *Footstep* of it in our Natures, but our *Will* will become as *obstinate* again, our *Affections* and *Appetites* as *wild* and *extravagant* as if we had all along permitted them to run on in an *uninterrupted* Course of Iniquity. And having thus *extinguisht* all the *good* Effects of our past Warfare, and rendred by our *wilful* Apostasie our Natures as *corrupt* and *depraved* as ever, we shall thereby be exposed again to the *Wrath* and *Displeasure* of God. For God's *Love* and *Hatred* are unvariably determined to the same Grounds and Reasons, and herein consists their *Immutability*, not that he always *loves*, or always *hates* the *same* persons, out of a *blind* Fondness to the one, or *unreasonable* Prejudice to the other, but that he always *loves* and always *hates* them for the *same* Reasons; and he hath expresly declared, that *Goodness* and *Wickedness* are the *contrary* Reasons of this his

contrary

contrary Affection to his Creatures; which if it be, 'twill hence neceſſarily follow, that as his *Hatred* muſt convert into *Love* to us, when from *wicked* we become *good*, ſo his *Love* muſt convert into *Hatred* of us when from *good* we degenerate into *wicked*. Which Alteration of his Affection towards us, proceeds not from any change in *his* Nature, but from a change in *ours*; he always proceeds upon *ſteady* and *unchangeable* Principles, and is for ever *fixt* and *conſtant* to the Reaſons of his *Love* and *Hatred*; which he could not be, if he did not alter his *Affection* to us, when the *Reaſon* of it is alter'd, if he did not *abominate* us when he ſees us fallen and *degenerated* from that State of *Goodneſs*, for the ſake of which he *loved* us, and took *pleaſure* in us. So that, by wilfully *retreating* from our religious Progreſs, we do not only extinguiſh all thoſe good *Effects* which it had *produced* in our Natures, not only *revive* thoſe inveterate Luſts we had almoſt *mortified*, and *blaſt* thoſe tender Graces which we had therein *acquired* and *improved*, but as a Conſequence of this, we *run* out of God's Arms and Embraces, and *throw* our ſelves *headlong* from thoſe glorious Hopes to which we have been all this while *advancing* with ſo much Labour and Difficulty. What a Madneſs therefore is it for Men to think of *retreating* that have once actually *ingaged* in the Chriſtian Warfare, to *ſurrender* themſelves back into Captivity to their Luſts, after they have fought ſo many *Combats* againſt, and obtained ſo many *Victories* over them! O conſider but the great *Pains* you have been at, the many *Prayers* and *Tears*, *Abſtinencies* and *Self-denials*, *Struggles* and *Contentions* with your ſelves, that

that it hath cost you to *retrieve* your selves from the *Dominion* of Sin, and the just *Vengeance* of God; and is it not a thousand Pities that all this should prove *lost labour* in the End, and be render'd as *fruitless* and *insignificant* to us as if it had *never* been? That after you have taken so much Pains to *stem* the difficult *Tide*, and are, at last, got within sight of *Shore*, you should now *faint* and *yield* to the Fury of it, and suffer your selves to be *born down* by it again into that *Ocean* of Sin and Guilt, out of which you were so safely recovered? Wherefore as you would not render *your labour in vain in the Lord*, and utterly defeat your selves of all the *Fruit* of your Religious *Endeavours*, be still perswaded to *struggle* and *contend*, to *strive* and *press forward to the mark of your high-calling*. For if now you *slacken* or *remit* your Endeavours, and *yield* to the Current of Temptation, you will soon be *driven down* by it again as far from the *Love* of God, and from the *Hope* of Heaven, as ever you were in the most *degenerate* State of your Natures.

III. Consider, That if, by *wilfully sinning*, we retreat from our Christian Warfare, we shall forfeit the Fruit of our Labour after we have undergone the *greatest difficulty* of it. For, as I shewed above, the *main* Difficulty of the Christian Warfare lies in the *Entrance* of it, and this I *suppose* you to have already past. You have already indured those sharp *Pangs* and *Throes* that are wont to accompany the *Birth* of a new Resolution; you have undergone the hard *Penance* of a deep and through Consideration, the sharp *Stings* and *Remorses* of a solemn and sorrowful Repentance;

tance; you have *forc'd* your most *Importunate* Inclinations, and *withstood* the most *violent* Counter-struggling of a *perverse* and *degenerate* Nature; you have *conquered* your Will in the Height of all its *Obstinacy* and *Resistance*, and *rescued* it from the Arms of your Lusts when 'twas most *inslaved* and *captivated* by them; all *this* you did, if you did any thing to any purpose, when you first *entered* upon this holy Warfare. And ever since you have been *breaking* the Strength of your evil Inclinations, and *conquering* the Antipathies of your Nature to your Religion; in which, if you have made any *Progress*, you must, by this Time, have *broken the Heart* of the Difficulty of your Warfare, and have much *less* Opposition to contend with *than ever*. So that now, in all Probablity, there is nothing so *difficult* between you and Heaven, as that which you have already *ingaged* with and *surmounted*; and will you now turn your backs upon your Enemy, when his *main* Strength is *spent*, and you have already *sustained* the most violent *Shocks* of his Power? If you had *retreated* at the first *Onset*, when your Sin was seated in its Dominion, and you were yet but *raising* your Forces, and *arming* your Resolution against it, it had been much more *excusable*; for then you had the *sharpest* part of your *Conflict* to undergo, being to contend with a *flusht* and a *victorious* Enemy, who having as yet all his Strength about him, could not fail to put your Courage to a mighty Trial. But *now* to retreat, when you are *past the worst*, and have gotten above *half way* thro'; when you have *pulled down* your Lust from its Throne and Dominion, and so far *subdued* it

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to your Religion and your Reason, that you have henceforward no more to do but to *pursue a Victory*, which though you got with a great deal of *Toil*, you may finish with a great deal of *Ease* and *Pleasure*; *now*, I say, to retreat in such a prosperous *Juncture*, and give up the blessed *Prize*, which you have been so long *contending* for, what *desperate Madness* is it! If you had never *begun* this Warfare, or yielded in the *first* Conflict of it, what a deal of *Pains* might you have *saved*? How many *Prayers* and *Tears*, *Strugglings* and *Contentions* with your selves might you have *escaped* and *avoided*, and at last been in as *good* a Condition, if not a *better*, than that wherein your *Apostasie* will certainly leave you? And when a Man hath been so long taking Heaven by *Storm* and *Violence*, when he hath broken through so many *Oppositions* to come at it, and in despite of all the *Darts* of Temptation from *without*, and of all the *Weights* and *Pressures* of Inclination from *within*, he is gotten up, as it were, to the *Top* of the *Scaling-Ladder*, has laid his hands on the *Battlements* of Heaven, and is ready to *leap in* and take *Possession* of the Joys of it, what a Madness is it for him now to *let go* his Hold and tumble *headlong* down again into that Abyss of Sin and Misery, out of which he had recovered himself with so much *Labour* and *Difficulty*! Especially considering,

IV. That by this our *Relapse* we shall not only forfeit the Fruit of our past Labour, but also render our *Recovery* more *hazardous* and *difficult* than ever. For what the Apostle pronounces concerning *Apostates* from *Christianity*, is in a great Measure

Measure appliable to those who have *engaged* in the Christian Warfare, *fall off* from it again to their old sinful Courses; *it is impossible*, i. e. *'tis extremely difficult for those that were once enlighten'd, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the World to come; if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance*, *Heb.* vi. 4, 5, 6. For, besides that, by *falling* from his first Repentance, a Man *grieves* and *chases* the Holy Spirit *from him*, without whose Aid he can neither *stand* when he is *up*, nor *recover* when he is *fallen*; and, having *chased him away*, he cannot well expect that he will be so ready to *return* and *co-operate* with him after he hath treated him so *rudely* by *quenching* his Motions, *unravelling* his Workmanship, and *extinguishing* all those heavenly Effects which his Grace had produced in his Soul. For how can this blessed *Assistant* of Souls but take it in great *Disdain* to be thus *mock'd* and *disappointed*, when he had been so industriously *labouring* for a Wretch's Good, to lift him out of the Mire wherein he was *sunk* and *perishing*; and when he had *succeeded* so far in his Labour as to help him *quite out*, and was *washing* and *cleansing* his polluted Spirit, and *dressing* it for the Embraces of the Father of Spirits, to see this Wretch *turn back* after all, and *plunge* himself headlong into the Mire again, how can he but *resent* such an ungrateful Disappointment of his Labour with unspeakable *Grief* and Indignation; And if, upon such *Resentment*, he *should*, as he justly *may*, wholly *retire* from him, and leave him *for ever* to wallow in his own Hearts Lust, his Condition will not be only

only *dangerous*, but *deſperate*. What the bleſſed Spirit *will* do, in this Caſe, I cannot certainly determine, becauſe he *may* do as he *pleaſes*, being totally *releaſed* by the Sinners Apoſtaſy from all Obligation of *Promiſe*. But it makes my Heart *ake* to think, how much Reaſon there is to *fear* that he will *utterly forſake* and *abandon* him, and not *throw away* any more of his Grace upon a Wretch, on whom he hath already ſpent ſo much to *no purpoſe*. And if the heinous *Affront* which the Bleſſed Spirit receives, by your *Apoſtaſy*, ſhould put him upon *this* Reſolution, you are damn'd *above-ground*, and *everlaſtingly* forſaken of all Hopes of Recovery. But beſides all *this*, (which one would think ſhould be ſufficient to *ſtartle* any ſober Man from making ſuch a deſperate *Experiment*) by *falling off* from your Repentance, you muſt needs be ſuppoſed to offer a mighty *Violence* to your Conſciences; which having been already *awaken'd* into a through Senſe of your *paſt* Sins, muſt neceſſarily reflect upon your *preſent* Apoſtaſy with unſpeakable *Horrour* and *Affrightment*; which if it doth not preſently *ſcare* ye back again to Repentance, will put ye upon more *deſperate* Courſes than ever. For now if your Conſcience won't be *quiet*, you have no other Remedy but to *ruffle* with it, and *out-brave* its Horrours by being more *courageouſly* wicked; and as thoſe barbarous Parents that ſacrificed their Children to *Moloch*, were fain to make Noiſes round the burning Idol, with *Drums* and *Timbrels* to drown their dying *Shrieks* and *Groans*, leſt they ſhould move them to Compaſſion; ſo when, by your *wilful Relapſes*, you have *ſacrificed* your Conſcience

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to your Luſt, and it begins to *Shriek out* from among thoſe Flames of Guilt whereinto you have caſt it, you have no other Remedy, unleſs you repent *immediately*, but to make a *Topbet* round about it, and drown its *Outcries* in Exceſſes of Riot; to put your ſelves into a *tumultuous Hurry* of Wickedneſs and Folly, that you may not hear thoſe *ill-boding Shrieks* within, and to *ſear* over the Wounds of your Conſcience with a *thick* Cuſtom of ſinning, that they may neither *bleed* nor *ſmart*. So that, if once you turn *Recreant* to your Chriſtian Warfare, you will be forced, in your own Defence, to plunge your ſelves *deeper* into Sin than ever. For now you muſt ſin, not only to *gratifie* your Luſts, but to *ſtupifie* your Conſcience, and this laſt you can never do without being *exceſſively* wicked. You muſt now be *puny* Sinners no longer, if ever you intend to ſin *quietly*, but reſolve to turn *Heroes* in Iniquity, and *out-ſin* your natural Senſe of Good and Evil. In order whereunto you muſt give your wounded Spirit *Gaſh* after *Gaſh*, and *follow the Blow* till you have left it *paſt feeling*; you muſt *heap on* Loads of Guilt upon your Conſcience, till, with the continued *Preſſure*, you have render'd it *callous* and *inſenſible*; and when, by this means, you have *ſunk* your ſelves *deeper* into Sin than ever (as you will, doubtleſs, *ſoon* do) how much more *difficult* and *hazardous* muſt your Recovery be? For now you will *need* much *more* Aſſiſtance than ever you did in your *firſt* Repentance, and have much *leſs* reaſon to *expect* it. So that though I dare not ſay your Condition will be *deſperate*; yet, I muſt tell ye, 'twill be ſo *fearfully dangerous*, that unleſs God, out of a *peculiar* Mercy

Mercy to ye, *awake* ye by some *extraordinary* providence, and at the same time *co-operate* with ye by an *extraordinary* Grace, you must certainly *miscarry* for ever.

V. Consider, That by your *deserting* of the Christian VVarfare, you will not only render your *future* Recovery more difficult, but you will also plunge your selves, *for the present*, into a far more *guilty* and *criminal* Condition than ever. For thus S. *Peter* determines in the Case, 2 *Pet.* ii. 20, 21. *If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the World, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and over-come, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment*; that is, by *relapsing* into those sinful Pollutions out of which they had been *rescued* by the Belief and Knowledge of Christianity, they have rendered themselves much more *guilty*, than they were before when they were *Infidels*; so that if they had never been *acquainted* with the Gospel, nor taken *one* Step in the Paths of its holy Commandments, it had been much better for them, and God would have been much less *angry* and *displeased* with them. For by our *Apostasie* into a wicked Life, we do not only return back into as *bad*, at least, if not a *worse* Condition than ever; but,

First, We do also *make void* all those *Operations* of the Spirit of God, by which we were so *effectually* perswaded to *undertake*, and hitherto to *prosecute* the Christian Warfare. By *relapsing* into a state

ſtate of Sin again, we wilfully *undo* all that he hath been *doing*, we *revive* thoſe Luſts which he hath been *mortifying*, and *root up* thoſe Graces which he hath been *planting* and *watering* within us; and when with great *Contrivance* and *Induſtry* he hath *dreſt* and *cultivated* our Nature, pluckt up the *Weeds* of it and planted it with the *Flowers* of Heaven, we wilfully *ſpoil* and *lay it waſte* again, and turn his growing *Sharon* into a barren *Wilderneſs*. So that beſides all that *Guilt* which ariſes from thoſe ſinful Courſes whereinto we are *relapſt*, we are now become guilty of the greateſt *Outrage* to the Spirit of God; we are guilty of *deſtroying* the deareſt Fruits of His Labour, of *laying waſte* his Incloſures, *quenching* his Motions, *extinguiſhing* his Graces, and *ſtrangling* all thoſe heavenly Effects which he by his powerful Goodneſs had *produced* in our Natures. And what a *black* Aggravation of our Guilt muſt it be, thus to *baffle* and *diſappoint* the Spirit of God? But then,

Seeondly; As by our *Apoſtaſie* we offer the rudeſt *Affront* to the Holy Spirit, ſo we commit the greateſt *Violence* both upon our *Conſcience* and *Experience*. For in all *Apoſtaſies* we ſin with an *awakened* Conſcience, with the *Convictions* of our Guilt *glaring* in our Eyes, and are fain to *contend* and *ſtruggle* with our own Mind, before we can break through thoſe *Checks* and *Reſtraints* it lays upon us, which muſt needs be a great *Aggravation* of our Guilt. For the more *light* and *perſuaſion* a man ſins againſt, the more of *Will* and *Malice* there is in his Sin, and conſequently the more of *Guilt*. For what can be more *Malicious*, than

for a man to *dare* and *defie* his own Convictions, and *charge* into the very Mouth of them, while they are *spitting fire*, and *roaring* everlasting Ruine against him? This plainly shews him to be acted by a *desperate* Resolution, when for the sake of his Lusts he dares *confront* the *Terrors* of his Conscience, and rather than be *barred* the Enjoyment of them, he will plunge himself *headlong* into a *foreseen* Ruine, and *leap* after them into Hell with his *Eyes open*. And yet *thus* we do in all our *wilful Apostasies*; we sin against the *quickest* Sense of our Danger, the *loudest* Warnings of our Conscience, and the *clearest* Convictions of our Reason; which being all most *horrid* Aggravations, must needs *swell up* our Guilt to a *monstrous* Proportion. Neither do we sin only against our *Conscience*, but also against our *Experience*. For it is to be supposed that we have made some *Proof* and *Trial* of Religion, and having done so, we must needs be sensible that there is nothing in it but what is *reasonable*, and *practicable*, and highly for our *Good*; nothing but what tends to the *Tranquillity* of our Minds, the *Peace* of our Consciences, and the *Perfection* of our Natures; and being throughly *assured* of all this, and that not so much by *Discourse* as by our own *Sense* and *Experience*, what a *horrid* Baseness would it be, if notwithstanding *this*, we should *renounce* and *desert* it? If we had never *tried* it, we might have urged our *Ignorance* or *Want* of *Experience* as an Apology for our *Refusal* to submit to it; we might have pretended that for want of a more intimate *Acquaintance* with it, we lookt upon its Commands as *impossible*, or at least as very *difficult* and altogether *fruitless* and

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ungrateful to humane Nature, and that if we had once *complied* with it, we must have presently *renounced* every thing that is *pleasant* and *desireable*, and from thenceforth have been contented to *sigh away* our Lives in *unsufferable* Severities and a *melancholly* Retirement from all the *Joys* and *Festivities* of humane Conversation; for such *frightful* Representations men that are *unexperienced* in Religion are apt to make of it; which though it be far from *justifying*, may in some Measure *extenuate* their Enmity to it. But you that have *tried* Religion, must needs have *experienced* that all this is *false*; that its Commands are easie *enough* to a *willing* Mind, and that the many *Advantages* they bring with them do abundantly *compensate* for their *Difficulty*; that they are so far from *barring* men any *innocent* Pleasure, or Comfort of humane Life, that they *purifie* the Pleasures of it, and render them more *grateful* and *generous*; that besides this, they bring mighty pleasures of their *own* along with them, the pleasures of a *glorious* Hope, a *serene* Mind, a *calm* and *undisturbed* Conscience, which are such as do far *outrelish* the most *studied* and *artificial* Luxuries; all this you cannot but know, if you have made any considerable *Trial* of a *sober* and *well-advised* Religion. So that if *now* you *Apostatize*, you will not only affront your *Conscience*, but your *Experience* too; and the *past* Sense you have had of the *Goodness* of Religion, will *rise up* in Judgment against ye, and for ever *silence* all the *Excuses* you can urge for your selves, and leave ye nothing to say, but that you were *sick* of your *Ease*, and tired with the *Refreshments* of Religion. But then,

Thirdly, As your *Apostasie* will be a grievous Affront to the Spirit of God, and to your own Conscience and Experience, so 'twill be one of the *foulest Dishonours* that you can cast upon *Religion.* If you had never been *ingaged* in the Christian Warfare, the *Honour* of Religion could never have been so nearly *touched* by your wicked Courses, and all considering Men would have attributed your *Enmity* to it, to your *Ignorance* and *want* of *Experience*, and never have thought the *worse* of it when they saw it so *contemptuously treated* by one that was never *acquainted* with it. But if *now* you revolt into wicked Courses after you have made *Trial* of it, what will the World say? Look ye, here is one that hath made an *Experiment* of the Religion you so much *celebrate*, and which you *extol* and *cry up* for such a *pleasant* and *amiable* thing; if it *were* what you *pretend*, how comes it to pass that after so long *Trial* and *Experience* of it, this man should now at last *renounce* and *forsake* it? Which is such an *Objection*, as can be no otherwise *solv'd* but by *demonstrating* the man whose Apostasie *started* it, to be *forsaken* and *abandoned* of his Reason. For if upon the *Trial* he hath made of Religion, he had experienced it to be that *good* and *grateful* thing it is *represented*, it is not to be imagined he would ever have *revolted* from it, had he been capable to *deliberate* of his own *Choices* and *Actions.* And how can they that are *Strangers* to Religion forbear *suspecting* the *Goodness* of it, when they see a man, after *Trial*, and in his *right Senses*, declare by his Actions that Vice is *better* and more *eligible* than Vertue, and to behold the *Pleasures* of Sin *preferr'd* before the

the *Joys* and *Satisfactions* of Religion, by one that hath made a *through Experiment* of them both? So that by *Apoſtatizing* into *ſinful* Courſes after a through *Trial* of Religion, we take an effectual Courſe to *defame* and *ſcandalize* it, to render *it a ſtone of ſtumbling and a rock of offence* to thoſe that have had but *little* or *no* Acquaintance with it; and if by our *Example* any ſhould be *diſheartned* either from *entering* into, or *proceeding* in the Chriſtian Warfare, their Blood will be one day required at *our Hands*, and ſo we ſhall raiſe a moſt *fearful* Cry upon our ſelves, and have not only the Spirit of God and our own Conſcience and Experience, but alſo the Blood of all thoſe Souls who have *ſtumbled* at our Apoſtacy, lifting up their Cries together to the Tribunal of God for a *dire* and *ſpeedy* Vengeance againſt us.

VI. Conſider, if after you have made ſome *Progreſs* in Religion you *revolt* into ſinful Courſes, you will not only render your ſelves for the *preſent* more guilty, but, as a Conſequence of that, you will certainly expoſe your ſelves, if you die before your *Recovery*, to a *deeper* and more *dreadful* Ruine. For this we may depend upon, that the Judge of all the World will do *righteouſly*, and conſequently, that as on the one hand he will proportion his *Rewards* to our *Services*, ſo on the other he will meaſure his *Puniſhments* by our *Guilts* and *Demerits*; and if he thus proceed (as he moſt *certainly* will) how horrible is it to think of the black and diſmal *Fate* that hangs over the Heads of *Apoſtates*, whoſe Guilt being *aggravated* by thoſe *above-named* Cricumſtances to ſuch a

prodigious Bulk and Magnitude, must be supposed to draw after it a Punishment *proportionable*? And if so, then doubtless the Portion of *Apostates* among *wicked* and *miserable* Spirits will be the most *wretched* and *deplorable*. For besides those *supernumerary* Stripes they must expect to receive from God, as being Servants that have *known* their Masters Will, and *experienced* the Goodness of it, and yet have finally *refused* to *comply* with it; their reflections on their own *Apostacy*, and the *Folly* and *Madness* of it will doubtless *gall* and *torment* them a thousand times more than all the other *Stings* of their Conscience together. For how must it *inrage* them against themselves, to *ruminate* on their own Follies, as they are *wandering* through the Infernal Shades! O *desperate* Creatures! from what *glorious* Hopes have we *precipitated* our selves into this *dismal* State! We had once got a *fair* Way *onwards* to Heaven, and were arrived within *Sight* of its blessed *Shores*: we had *shaken off* our Lusts, *mastered* our Inclinations, and subdued our Wills to the Will of God; and in so doing had *conquered* the most *difficult* Part of our Voyage; we had weathered the *cross Winds* of Temptation from *without*, and *Stemm'd* the *Tide* of corrupt Nature *within*; so that had we but bore up couragiously a *little farther*, we that are now *howling* among damned Ghosts, might have been *triumphing* with blessed Spirits. But O *abominable* Fools and Traytors to our selves! after all the *successful* Pains we had taken to be *happy*, we have *shipwrack'd* our Souls at the *Mouth* of our *Harbour*, and to *gratifie* a base Lust, have leapt *headlong* from the Brink of the *Rivers of Pleasure*, into

into this *Lake of Fire and Brimstone.* And have we *thus* undone our selves, *thus* madly, *thus* without Pretence or Temptation! O! *cursed* be our Folly, *cursed* be our Lusts, and *for ever cursed* be *we* for *harbouring* and *entertaining* them! Thus will these miserable People *incessantly rave* against themselves, and with *dire* Reflections on their *desperate* Follies for ever *inrage* and *multiply* their own Torments. So that were I *descending* to the bottomless Pit, and had but *so much* Time before I came there, as to make *one* Prayer more in my own Behalf, *next* to that of being *wholly delivered* thence, I know none I should *sooner* pitch upon, than *this, O Lord deliver me from that Portion of Hell, which thou hast reserved for Apostates.*

So that if now, that we have so far *ingaged* our selves in the Christian Warfare, we should be so mad as to *retreat* into our own sinful Courses, it had been a thousand times *better* for us that we had never ingaged in it *at all.* For unless we repent of our *Retreat*, and *come on* again, we have taken a great deal of *Pains* in Religion to no *other* Purpose, but only *to treasure up to our selves wrath against the day of wrath*, and *heat* the *Furnace* of our future Torments yet *seven times hotter.* Wherefore since the Matter is now reduced to this Issue, that if we *revolt* from our *Christian Warfare* we shall not only *defeat* our selves of all the Fruit of our *past* Labour and Contentions, but also *enhance* our *future* Punishment; so that we must either resolve to *win Heaven* by our *Perseverance*, or *sink our selves* into the nethermost Hell by our *Apostasie*; let us pull *up* our Courage, and maugre all Temptations to the contrary, continue

ſteadfaſt and *immoveable* in our Chriſtian Reſolution, remembring what the *Captain of our Salvation* hath promiſed, *Rev.* iii. 21. *To him that overcomes, will I grant to ſit with me in My Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſate down with My Father in His Throne.*

CHAP. V.

Containing ſome ſhort Directions *for the more profitable reading the preceding Diſcourſe, and alſo for the Conduct and regular Exerciſe of our* Cloſet Religion *in all the different State of the* Chriſtian Life; *together with* Forms *of* private Devotion *fitted to each State.*

IN the forgoing Chapter I have indeavoured a full Account of all thoſe *inſtrumental Duties* of Chriſtianity by which we are to *acquire, improve* and *perfect* the principal Vertues of it, in the Perfection of which Vertues, *Heaven*, which is the great *End* of Chriſtianity, conſiſts. And for the more diſtinct management thereof, I conſidered men under a threefold State; Firſt, as *entering* into the Chriſtian Life; Secondly, as *actually ingaged* in the Courſe of it; Thirdly, as *improving* towards Perfection by Perſeverance in it; and gave a diſtinct account of all thoſe Inſtrumental Duties that are proper to *each* of theſe States. And now that what

what hath been said in that and the preceeding Chapters may have its due Effect upon the *Reader's* Mind, I have thought fit to reduce it to Practice, by directing Men,

First, How to *read* and *apply* the several parts of it to their own particular States;

Secondly, By furnishing them with some short *Rules*, for the more profitable Exercise of their *private Religion* in each of those different States, together with *Forms* of *private Devotion*, fitted to each State.

I. As to the first of these, it is to be considered, that to the making Men *sincere* and *hearty* Christians, it is highly necessary that they should have a right Understanding, First, of the Nature of the great and chief *End* which Christianity proposes to them; Secondly, of the *Means*, by which that End is to be obtained; Thirdly, of the natural Tendency of all the *Vertues* of Christianity towards this *blessed End*, and of the contrary Tendency of the opposite *Vices* towards their *eternal Misery* and *Ruine*. Of all which I have indeavoured to give an Account in the *three first Chapters* of this Book. Wherefore I would advise the Reader,

1. *Carefully* and *seriously* to peruse those Chapters wherein (because I have been sometimes forced by the *sublimity* of my Argument to discourse a little more *abstrusely* than in any of the following Parts) it will be necessary for him to imploy more of his *Thoughts* and *Considerations*, and not to content himself with a *slight* and *cursory* Perusal. And when, by a serious Consideration of what hath been there discoursed, his Mind is fully

fully convinced what a kind of *Heaven* he is to expect hereafter, what kinds of *Means* are necessary to obtain it, how naturally all the *Vertues* of Religion do *raise up* Mens Souls to *Heaven*, and how all the contrary *Vices* do as naturally *sink* and *press* them down to *Hell*, it is to be hoped he will be fully perswaded of the indispensible Necessity of *entering* into the *Christian Life*; which if he be, I would advise him,

2. *Seriously* to read over and consider the *first* and *second* Sections of the *fourth* Chapter, wherein are contained the several Duties which are proper to his State of *Entrance* into the *Christian Life*, and also proper *Arguments* and *Motives* to ingage him to the Practice of them; which, if he would read to good Effect, he must, by no means, content himself with a *single Perusal*, but read them over at least *once a week* whilst he continues in that State, till he fully comprehends the *Meaning* and Use of all those *Duties*, and the *Force* and *Cogency* of those *Arguments*; which if he do, it is to be hoped he will, at last, be reduced to a *through* and *well-weighed* Resolution of *forsaking* his Sins, and *actually ingaging* in the Christian Life. Which being done, I would advise him,

3. With the same Care and Frequency, to peruse the *third* and *fourth* Sections of the *fourth* Chapter, wherein are contained all the several Duties proper to this second State of *actual Engagement* in the *Christian Life*, as also sundry *Arguments* or *Motives* to press and inforce them; and when, by the Assistance of these Duties he hath continued for some time *faithful* and *constant* to his good Resolution,

4. Toge-

4. Together with the *third* and *fourth* Section, let him often peruse and consider the *fifth* and *sixth*, wherein are contained the Duties appertaining to the third State of *Improvement* and *Preservation* in the *Christian Life*, together with some *Considerations* to inforce the Practice of them. All which I would earnestly persuade the pious Reader to read and consider over and over again, till his Mind is fully instructed in the *Nature* and *Use* of each *Duty*, and hath throughly digested the *Force* and *Evidence* of every *Argument*. And this may suffice for the first thing proposed, concerning the profitable Method of *reading* this practical Treatise.

II. As for the second Part of it, which is that which I mainly design in this Chapter, *viz.* the *Rules* and *Directions* for the *private* Exercise of our Religion, in each State of the *Christian Life*, together with the *Forms* of *private Prayer*, fitted for each, take them in their following Order.

Directions for the more profitable Exercise of our private Religion *in the State of our* Entrance *into the* Christian Life.

In the *Morning*, before you go into the World, enter into your Closet, and there consider with your self a while the miserable State you have reduced your self to by your past sinful Courses, the absolute Necessity of your forsaking them, and the possibility of your Recovery, if you heartily indeavour it; and then address your self to God in this following *Prayer*.

O *Moſt Glorious and Eternal God, Thou art the fountain of Beings, the Father of Angels and Men, the righteous and almighty Governour of Heaven and Earth; from Thy Throne Thou beholdeſt all the Children of Men, and their moſt ſecret Actions are open and naked to Thy all-ſeeing Eye; and ſuch is the Purity of Thy Nature, that Thou loveſt Righteouſneſs and hateſt Iniquity whereſoever Thou beholdeſt it; with what Face can I, a moſt miſerable polluted Wretch, appear in thy preſence, who, by the paſt courſe of my Wickedneſs and Rebellion againſt Thee, have not only rendred my ſelf guilty and juſtly obnoxious to Thy eternal Diſpleaſure, but have alſo contracted ſuch obſtinate Diſpoſitions and Inclinations to ſin on, as, without Thy Grace and Aſſiſtance, I ſhall never be able to conquer! O deſperate, vile, and ungrateful Wretch that I have been! I have renounced the God of my Being, and the Fountain of my Mercies; I have deſpiſed thy Goodneſs, trampled upon Thy Authority, mock'd and abuſed Thy patience and long-ſuffering, and, in particular, I muſt confeſs, to my own Shame and Confuſion, I have been wofully guilty of* *. *And now, by theſe my manifold Abominations, I have utterly undone my ſelf unleſs thou take pity upon me. I confeſs I have forfeited my ſoul into thy hands, and if thou ſo pleaſeſt, thou may juſtly caſt me away from thy Preſence, and make me a dire Example of thy Vengeance for ever. But, I know, O Lord, that Thou deſireſt not the Death of a Sin-*

* Here make a particular Confeſſion of all thoſe ſinful Courſes you have lived in, together with all their aggravating Circumſtances of Impudence, Obſtinacy, and Ingratitude, *&c.*

a Sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, and upon the Propitiation of thine own Son's blood, Thou hast declared Thy Self willing to receive returning Prodigals, and to be heartily reconciled to them, notwithstanding all their past Provocations. O that I could return, that I could but shake off those corrupt Inclinations which detain my wretched Soul in Captivity! I am willing to contribute towards it whatsoever I am able, but, alas, without Thee all that I can do will be utterly ineffectual. Wherefore, for Thy tender Mercies sake, for thy dear Son's and my Saviour's sake, have pity upon a miserable Wretch, that, without Thy helping hand, is lost for ever. And, since thou hast given me Thy Gospel as an outward means to save and recover me, O do Thou inable me, by Thy blessed Spirit heartily to believe, and throughly to consider it. For which end, I beseech Thee to remove all sinful Prejudices from my Mind, that so I may impartially weigh those Evidences Thou hast given me of the Truth of it; and do thou suggest them to my Mind with such a clear and convincing Light, as that they may at last conquer my Infidelity, and beget in me a firm and lively Faith. And forasmuch as my Mind is vain and roving, and utterly averse to all serious Considerations, O do Thou, who art the Father of Spirits, and canst turn the Hearts of Men which way Thou pleasest, inspire good Thoughts into me, and imprint them upon me with such a Power and Efficacy, as that my wandring Mind may be reduced by them to a thro' Consideration, and my stubborn Will to a firm Resolution of Amendment. Particularly, I beseech Thee to give me a right understanding of the urgent need I have of a Saviour, and of all those things which he hath done and

suffered

suffered, and is still doing at thy right hand, in order to the cleansing my guilty and polluted Nature, and restoring me to thy Grace and Favour; that so hereby I may be fully convinced how odious my Sins are in thy sight, how base and vile they have rendered me, and at what a mighty Distance they have set me from Thee, and that, being convinced of this, I may put on a holy Shame and Confusion, and abhor my self in Dust and Ashes before thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, it is not in my power to soften this hard and unrelenting Heart, and affect it with that Godly Sorrow which is requisite to work a true Repentance. O do Thou smite it with such a sharp and piercing sense of my Sins, as may cause the flouds of unfeigned Grief and Contrition to gush forth from it. Cause me to bleed for my Sins now, that I may not bleed for them for ever; and that having felt the smart and anguish of them, I may utterly detest and abhor them, and never be reconciled to them more. Thus do Thou assist me, O good God, in the exercise of all these Duties, till Thou hast throughly conquered my Will by them, and prepared it for a firm Resolution to forsake all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World. And now that I am going into the world among those very Temptations that have hitherto so miserably captivated and inslaved me, O let Thy Blessed Spirit be present with me, to keep my drowsie Conscience awake, and arm me against them with His holy Inspirations, that so those good Thoughts and Desires which Thou hast at present excited in me, may stick fast upon my Soul in the midst of my worldly Occasions, and never cease importuning my Conscience, Will, and Affections, till they have produced in me the happy Effects

fects of a serious and hearty Repentance. All which I most earnestly beseech of Thee, even for pity sake, to a poor perishing Soul, and for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose name and words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

In the *Evening*, when you find your self most fit for serious Thoughts, go into your Closet again, and consider coolly with your self whether you are heartily willing to part with every Sin, and particularly with your beloved Sin, and to submit to every Duty, and even to those that are most contrary to your vicious Inclination; if you are not (as it's very probable you will not for some time) or if you find the least reason to suspect you are not, press your self anew with such Divine Reasons as are most apt to affect you with the Hope of Heaven, and the Fear of Hell, with the Love of God and of your Saviour; represent your Obstinacy to your self, with all its Baseness and Dis-ingenuity, Madness and Folly, till you find your self affected with a sorrowful sense of it, and then offer up this following *Prayer*.

O *Father of Mercies and God of all Grace and Consolation, who art a ready help in time of need, look down upon me, I beseech Thee, a miserable and forlorn Wretch, that have wilfully sold my self Captive to the Devil, and am now strugling to get loose from this my wretched Bondage into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. I know, O Lord, that I am striving for my immortal Life, and accordingly as I succeed I expect to be happy or miserable for ever. I have seriously considered the Reasons on both sides, and*

and am fully satisfied in my Mind, that there is infinitely more Force in Thy Promises and Threats, than in all the Difficulties of my Duty and the Pleasures of my Sin. But, after all this, I find a Law in my Members warring against the law in my Mind, a perverse Will that rejects the Counsels of my Reason, that makes obstinate Reservations of some beloved Sins, and Exceptions to some particular Duties, in despite of all the persuasion of my Reason and Religion. So that, after all my Endeavour, I am still detained in Captivity to the law of sin that is in my Members, and am not able to incline my self to an intire Resolution of Amendment. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death! I know, O Lord, though I am weak and impotent, and of my self unable to shake off the Chains and Fetters of my Lusts, yet Thy Grace is abundantly sufficient to reduce and deliver me from them; and Thou hast promised to assist with it my honest Endeavours, and crown them with a blessed Success. Wherefore, for Thy Truth and Mercies sake, suffer not Thy poor Creature, who, with pitiful and bemoaning Looks, cries out for help to Thee, to spend himself in weary and fruitless struglings against this violent Torrent of my sinful Nature, which, without thy aid, will quickly overcome my poor Endeavours, and drive me down into eternal perdition. My sole Dependance is upon Thee, my Hope of Success is wholly in Thee; help, Lord, help, or else I perish; stretch forth Thy powerful arm to my sinking Soul, and let not this Deep swallow me up; but do Thou so quicken my faint Endeavours, so strengthen my weak and doubting Faith, so enliven my cold and languid Considerations, so clear up my Convictions of my need of a Saviour, and

and of the Danger and Odiousness of my Sins, & thereby so increase my penitential Sorrows and Remorses, as that by all these means together my obstinate Will may at last be conquered, and effectually perswaded to part with every Sin, be it never so dear to me, and to comply with every Duty, be it never so cross to my vile Inclination. Then shall I freely resign up my self unto thee, and with a firm Resolution devote all my Powers to thy Service. And that I may do so, and by so doing be reconciled to thee, O my offended God, before I go hence and be no more seen, receive me, I beseech thee, into thy protection this Night, that I may yet see the light of another Day, and have a longer space to finish my Repentance. All which I humbly implore even for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose name & words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

If upon searching your own Heart, you find that after you have fairly represented to your self what sinful Pleasures you must part with, what Duties you must submit to, and what Difficulties you must ingage with, you are willing without any Reserve or Exception, to submit your self to God, beware you be not too hasty to form your *Resolution*, but take some little time to try your self; see whether you will continue to morrow of the same mind you are in now, and if then you perceive you have reason to suspect your self, try a little longer, and at the present indeavour as much as in you lies to confirm and settle your self in the good Mind you are in, by pressing and urging your self with all those Arguments of your Religion by which you have been thus far convinced and perswa-

ded; and while you are thus trying your self, instead of the former, let this be your *Evening Prayer.*

O Blessed Lord and most merciful Father, thou art a God hearing Prayer, and to thee shall all flesh come; I admire thy Goodness, I adore thy Grace, that after so many heinous provocations I have given thee, for which thou mightest have justly shut thine ears against me for ever, thou hast heard my Cries, and pitied my Misery, and thus far contributed towards my Recovery. I acknowledge 'tis by thy Grace that I am what I am, that this stubborn Heart begins at last to relent, this perverse Will to bow and stoop, these lewd Affections to hunger and thirst after Righteousness; that now at last my foolish Soul is perswaded to part with those sins which are its Plagues and Infelicities, and to imbrace those blessed Duties by which thou hast designed to raise me to immortal Glory. By these good Beginnings thou hast given me some Reason to hope for a happy Success upon my poor Endeavours. Praised be thy Grace, I am at present heartily willing to be thine, and were I but sure to continue thus minded and disposed, I would immediately make over my Heart and Will to thee by the most solemn Engagement. But, O Lord, I am afraid of my self, I dread my own Inconstancy, and thou knowest I have too much Reason for it. I have mocked thee too often already with my deceitful Promises and Engagements; I have sinn'd & then promised Amendment, I have promised Amendment and then sinn'd again, as if all that I meant by my Promises, were only to ask leave of thee to sin against thee anew: & now after so many Falsifications I would not for all the

the World deal treacherously with thee any more; wherefore before I solemnly resign and devote my self to thee by a new Purpose and Engagement, I desire to make some farther Trial of my own Stedfastness, to see whether this present Inclination of my Will be the effect of Passion or a setled Judgment. In the mean time therefore I do most humbly beseech thee to be present with me in all my ways, and continually to influence my Mind with thy Grace and Spirit; to strengthen my Faith, to fix my Consideration, to perswade my Will, and feed and cherish these my holy Desires with good Thoughts and Inspirations, that so I may remain stedfast and immovable, and no Temptation whatsoever may be able to alter the Temper of my mind, or divert it from its good Inclination; and that having had a sufficient Experience of the fixed Disposition of my Soul to obey thee, I may devote my self to thee with a chearful Heart, and an assured Hope of my own Sincerity and constancy. O Lord hear and help me for thy Mercies sake, and for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose most perfect Form of Prayer I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

If after a sufficient Trial of your self, you find you are constantly inclined to submit to God, to part with every Sin, and comply with every Duty, consider that now it is high time for you to devote your self to God, and what abundant Reason you have for it, and what a powerful Obligation you must lay upon your self by so doing; and when you have seriously considered these things, give up your self to God in this following *Form of Prayer*; which for the greater *Sanction* and more awful *Solemnity* of

your good Resolution, you would do well to repeat at the next *Sacrament*.

O *Most merciful Father, so infinite is the Goodness of thy Nature, that thou art always ready to pity and relieve the poor and needy, and to extend thy timely Succours to us helpless Sinners whensoever we cry unto thee. Of the truth whereof thou hast given me, who am the vilest of Sinners, a most sensible Proof and Experiment. For not long ago I was so dead in Trespasses and Sins, that hadst not thou took pity upon me, and quickned me by thy Grace, I had died for ever; my understanding was so blind that I saw not my Danger, my Conscience so sear'd that I felt not my Guilt, my Will so inslaved to my Lusts that I could not indure to think of parting with them; but now, blessed be thy Grace which first excited my Endeavours, and hath hitherto prospered them, I do not only see the danger my Sins have exposed me to, and sensibly feel the Guilt of them, but am freely willing to renounce them for ever, & to part even with those darling Lusts that have heretofore been as dear to me as my right Eye. And now, O Lord, I am come before thee, and I hope with a truly Loyal and sincere Heart, to offer up my Soul and Body to thee, and vow an everlasting Obedience to thy blessed Will. For Jesus sake refuse not this poor Oblation, which though it be infinitely unworthy of thine Acceptance, is the best thing I am able to present thee. To thee, O glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I do from henceforth eternally devote my self & all my Faculties* [*And here at the Table of my blessed Saviour, and upon these sacred

* When you renew your Vow in the Sacrament, add,

sacred Memorials of his Wounds and Bloud] *I utterly abjure all known and wilful Sins and Rebellions, and particularly all such as have been heretofore most dear to me; faithfully promising by thy gracious Assistance from henceforth to observe thy Law without any reserve or exception. This in the Sincerity of my Soul I do here vow to thy Divine Majesty, and however I may be hereafter tempted I will never wilfully depart from it, or from any Part of it, so help me, O my God, for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose own words I farther pray,* Our Father, &c.

Directions for the more profitable Exercise of our private Religion *in the state of our* actual Engagement *in the* Christian Life.

When you go into your Closet in the *Morning*, consider seriously with your self the solemn Engagement you lie under; what a crying guilt it would be to violate it, what Madness and Folly to recede from it, after you have taken so much pains to reduce your self to it, what mighty Reasons you have to persist in it, and what powerful Assistance is promised you, if you be not wanting to your self; and then offer up this following *Prayer.*

O *Eternal God, who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and dost through him bestow so many good and perfect Gifts upon thy Creatures, I desire for ever to remember and adore thy Goodness towards me, whom thou hast snatched as a Firebrand out of*

the Fire, and at length reduced to a serious purpose of amendment after a long and obstinate course of Disobedience, in which if I had still persisted I must have perished everlastingly. O blessed be thy great Name, that after so many years Rebellion against thee, for which I have long ago deserved to be banished into utter Darkness, I do yet behold the light of another Day, and am allowed a farther space to repent and execute my purpose of Amendment. And now, O Lord, as thou hast wrought my Will into a good Resolution, in despight of all the corrupt Inclinations of my Nature, leave not, I beseech thee, thy Workmanship unfinished, but by the mighty Operation of thy Grace excite and inable me faithfully to perform what I have so seriously resolved. It is a mighty Work that I have undertaken, to cleanse a base polluted Nature, and root up all its filthy Lusts and Affections, and plant it with all the heavenly Dispositions, and improve them into everlasting Happiness; and thou know'st what strong Oppositions will be made against me, and with what powerful Temptations I must struggle throughout the whole Course of my future Endeavour. So that unless thou wilt still go along with me, and still quicken and animate me by thy blessed Spirit, my Work is so great, and my Strength so little, that it will be in vain for me to proceed any farther. These importunate Temptations that surround me will quickly conquer my present Resolution, and I shall do, as I have too often done already, resolve and sin, and sin and resolve, and so increase my Guilt by the Treachery of my Vows and Engagements. Wherefore for Jesus Christ his sake, withdraw not thy self from me, but continue to assist my weak Endeavours

by

by thy powerful Grace, till thou hast crown'd them with a perfect Victory. For which End, I beseech thee, inspire me more and more with Patience and Constancy of Mind, that I may stand fast in my good Resolution in despight of all Temptations to the contrary. Suggest to my Mind those holy Examples thou hast set before me, especially that of my blessed Saviour, and incline my heart to copy and imitate them. Direct me to some wise and faithful Guide that may be willing and able to assist me in all my spiritual Necessities; and by frequently exciting me to dedicate my Actions to thee, do thou purifie my Intentions from sinful and from carnal Aims, that so I may always live to thy Glory. And since thou art present with me where-ever I am, and dost always behold me whatsoever I am doing; O do thou inspire me with such a strong continual and actual Sense of it, as may be a constant Check to sinful Inclinations, and render me afraid of offending thee. Let thy blessed Spirit be my constant Monitor, to put me in mind to consider my Ways, and frequently to examine my Actions, that so whenever I go astray I may be immediately convinced of it, and by my speedy Repentance recover my self before I have wandered too far from my Duty. And grant, I beseech thee, that the sense of my past Failings may still render me more watchful and circumspect for the future; that whensoever I have been careleſly or wilfully faulty, I may from thenceforth be more cautious of my Actions, and more vigilant against the Temptations that betrayed me. And that I may not run my self unnecessarily into Temptation for the future, preserve me, O Lord, from sloth and idleness, and from intermedling with matters that

do not belong to me, and do thou still put me in mind to do my own Business, and to be faithful and diligent in the State and Calling wherein thou hast placed me. And that I may always serve thee with Freedom and Alacrity, remove from me I beseech thee all unprofitable Sadness and Melancholy, and help me to acquire an equal Tranquility of Mind, and a becoming Chearfulness of Spirit. For which end, Good Lord, do thou inspire me with a lively Sense and earnest Expectation of that blissful State towards which I am travelling; that having this glorious Prospect always in my Eye, I may go on with Joy and Triumph over all the Difficulties and Temptations that oppose me. And that by all these means I may be more and more strengthened and confirmed in the good Resolution I have made, do thou stir up my slothful mind to a diligent Attendance on thy publick Ordinances, that so in the solemn Assemblies of thy Saints I may constantly hear thy Word with Reverence and Attention, offer up my Prayers with Fervency and Devotion, and approach thy Table with all that Humility and Love, Gratitude and Resignation of Soul that becomes this solemn Remembrance and Representation of my dying Saviour. In these things, and whatsoever else is needful to secure my Resolution of Obedience, assist me, O Lord, for Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with thy self and eternal Spirit be render'd all Honour, Glory and Power, from this time forth for evermore.

After this Prayer bethink your self a little what Temptations you are like to meet with in the ensuing Business of the Day, and briefly recollect

collect those powerful Arguments which the Gospel urges to fortifie you against them, and apply them particularly to the Sin or Sins you are most inclined to, and then renew your Resolution to God in the following *Prayer.*

O *God, who art my Hope and Strength, upon whose Aid and Assistance I depend, look down I beseech thee upon a poor helpless Creature, who am going forth into a busie World, that is full of Snares and Temptations. Blessed be thy Name, my Heart continues still resolved upon a through Course of Amendment; and therefore here in thy dreadful Presence I do again most solemnly promise and ingage my self, that whatsoever Temptations I meet with this Day, I will not wilfully commit any Sin, no not the Sin I am most inclined to; nor omit any Duty, how contrary soever it may be to my Nature; and that I will faithfully indeavour to keep such a constant Guard upon my self, as that I may not be surprized and overtaken through my own inadvertence and unwarinefs. But this, O Lord, I promise not out of any Confidence in my own Strength, but in dependence upon thee, and in Hope, that out of thy tender Pity to a poor impotent Wretch, thou wilt not be wanting to me in any necessary Assistance, but that either thou wilt remove from me all great and importunate Temptations, or inable me, by thy Grace, to repel and vanquish them; and this I do most earnestly beseech, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, with whose Prayer I conclude this my Morning Sacrifice,* Our Father, &c.

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In the *Evening* when you find your ſelf beſt diſpoſed for religious Exerciſe, ſet apart ſuch Portions of your Time as you can conveniently ſpare from your neceſſary Refreſhment and Diverſion, to call your ſelf to Account concerning the Actions of the Day; and enquire whether they have been agreeable to your Morning Promiſe and Reſolution; and upon Enquiry you will find either that you have *faithfully diſcharged* what you promiſed, or that you have ſinned *unawares*, or through *Careleſneſs* and *Self-neglect*, or that you have ſinned *wilfully* and againſt your own *Conſcience*.

If upon Enquiry it appear that you have been *faithful* to your Morning Engagement, repreſent to your ſelf the great Reaſon you have to rejoyce in it, and to praiſe God for it, and then offer up this following *Thankſgiving*.

BLeſſed be thy Name, O moſt gracious and merciful Father, for thoſe great and numberleſs Favours which from time to time thou haſt heaped upon me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all thy Mercies; particularly, for the ſignal Mercies of this Day, for that thou haſt not ſhut thine Ears againſt my Prayers, nor withdrawn thy ſelf from me, but haſt accompanied me with thy Grace through all thoſe Snares and Temptations to which I have been expoſed. Praiſed by thy Name, that thou haſt not ſuffered me to be tempted above what I was able, that thou haſt ſo powerfully aſſiſted me againſt theſe Temptations I have been ingaged with, and by putting ſo many good Thoughts into my Mind, haſt ſtrengthened my Reſolution

solution and rendered it so successful and victorious. 'Tis to thy Grace that I owe all the good I have done, and 'tis by thy Aid that I have escaped all the evils I have been tempted to; wherefore not unto me, O Lord, not unto my Strength or Endeavours, but unto thy Name be all the Glory and Praise of this days Deliverance and Preservation. O never let the Remembrance of this thy Goodness towards me depart from my Mind, but let it kindle in me such a grateful Sense, as may more and more incite me to love and obey thee, and depend upon thee for the future. And as thou hast been pleased to conduct me safely by thy Grace through all the Dangers and Temptations of the Day, so do thou take me into thy Care and Protection this Night, and grant that I may awake in the Morning with a Heart so inflamed with the Remembrance of thy Goodness, and so incouraged with this Days success, and so indeared to the Practice of Vertue by the growing Delights and Pleasures of it, as that I may persist in my religious Course with greater Courage and Alacrity; and this I humbly beg for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose name and words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

If upon Enquiry you find that you have been failing in your Duty, or that you have done any evil Action through meer *Heedlesness* or *Surprize*, indeavour to affect your self with a sorrowful Sense of your own Folly, Weakness, and Carelesness, and then conclude with this *Form of Humiliation.*

O *Most blessed Lord God, who art infinitely glorious in thy own Righteousness and Holiness, and dost*

doſt for ever will and act according to thy own Nature, which is the moſt perfect Law and Pattern of Goodneſs. To thy ſpotleſs Nature no Evil can approach, who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; with what Confidence then can ſuch a polluted Creature as I am appear in thy Preſence, how can I lift up my guilty Eyes to thy Throne, who to my paſt Rebellions, which have been more in number than the hairs on my Head, have this day added ſo many ſinful Failings and Defects, that, ſhouldeſt thou be ſevere to mark what I do amiſs, were ſufficient to kindle thy Diſpleaſure againſt me! 'Twas but this Morning that I ingaged my ſelf to thee, not only to abſtain from all wilful and deliberate Sins, but alſo to ſet a watch upon my Mouth and Actions that I might not offend thee unawares; but to my Shame I muſt acknowledge, I have been wofully careleſs and remiſs, having this day ſuffered my ſelf thro' my own Inadvertency to be ſurprized into ſuch Actions as nothing can render pitiable or excuſable in thy Sight but the miſerable Frailty and Weakneſs of my Nature. What ſhall I ſay unto thee, O thou Judge of all the Earth! I am guilty, I am guilty, and have nothing to plead for my ſelf but the bloud of Jeſus, that all-ſufficient Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. O Lord, I do earneſtly repent, and am heartily ſorry for theſe my Miſ-doings, the Remembrance of them is grievous unto me, the Burthen of them is intolerable; have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, moſt merciful Father, and for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake forgive me all that is paſt, and grant that the Senſe of theſe my miſcarriages may render me more careful and vigilant for the future. And let thy bleſſed Spirit be always preſent with my Mind to recollect my Diſtractions, and awake my Conſiderations, and warn me of my Dangers, that I may

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no more be surprized by sudden Temptations, nor hurried into evil Actions by unexpected Hopes or Fears; but do thou so subdue my lower Appetites to my Will, my Will to my Understanding, and my Understanding to thy Spirit, as that under his blessed Conduct I may for the future be prepared against all Temptations, and furnished to every good Work. And now, O Lord, let not the Failings I have been guilty of this Day, deprive me of thy gracious Protection this Night, but grant that after a safe and comfortable Repose, I may awake in the Morning with such a sorrowful Sense of them, as may for the future oblige me to be more watchful and resolute against them. All which I beg for Jesus Christ his sake, with whose Prayer I conclude this my Evening Sacrifice, Our Father, &c.

If upon Enquiry it appear that you have committed any *wilful, deliberate* Sin, indeavour to affect your self with Horror, Shame and Compunction for it, by representing to your Conscience the monstrous Foulness and Ingratitude, the deep Malignity and desperate Madness of your own Action, and then conclude with this *Form of particular Repentance.*

O Thou most dreadful Majesty of Heaven and Earth, who hatest Iniquity, and hast proclaimed from Heaven thy fierce Indignation against all Unrighteousness & Ungodliness of men, look down I beseech thee upon me, a vile and guilty Wretch, who stand here arraigned at thy Tribunal by my own Conscience, and am so confounded with the sense of my Sin, and of thy just displeasure against me, that I tremble

tremble to draw near unto thee, and yet I dare not stay from thee. I acknowledge my self unworthy, infinitely unworthy, to come before thee, and am prompted by my own Horrour and Shame to hide my self from thee, but yet I know I must come or I must perish. And therefore here, O Lord, I cast my self at thy Feet, and if thou shalt think meet to tread upon me, and to spurn me from thy Presence for ever, I must own that thou art just and righteous in all thy Ways. For thou hast been wonderfully good beyond what I could modestly have wish'd, or am able to express; thou tookest pity upon me when I was all wounded and polluted, and weltring in my Bloud, when I was sleeping securely upon the brink of Perdition, and had scarce any Sense or Feeling of my Guilt and Misery; in this woful plight didst thou visit my poor Soul, and with thy preventing Grace awake me to a sense of my Danger, and effectually warn me to flee from that wrath to come. And now when thou hadst brought me to my self, and to a through Resolution of Amendment, and my soul was in a fair way of Recovery, like an ungrateful Wretch as I am, I have flown in the Face of my Physician, I have abused his Goodness, and baffled his Grace, and wilfully and deliberately torn open my Wounds again. And this I have done most treacherously, as well as ungratefully, not only against all the Obligations of thy Goodness, but also against my own repeated Vows and Engagements. For 'twas but this Morning that I solemnly renewed to thee my Promise of Obedience, and therein vowed not to offend thee wilfully upon any Temptation whatsoever; but O vile Traytor that I am, both to thee and to my own Soul, I have

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by * *most basely falsified this my engagement; and this I did with the most unpardonable Circumstance, even against the Dissuasions of thy Grace, the Checks of my Conscience, and the fairest Warnings of my Danger. Had I done it ignorantly, or unawares, or under a surprize, it had been pitiable; but, O my Guilt, my Guilt, 'twas knowingly, wilfully, basely, and maliciously that I did this evil in thy sight; whereby I have forfeited my Soul, my Innocence and thy Love, and have got nothing in exchange but the Pleasure of a Minute, and a lasting Shame and Repentance. O vile Wretch, O desperate Fool that I am, what have I done! whither am I fallen! I have grieved thy Spirit, contemned thy Authority, trampled on thy Goodness, and wounded my own Conscience, and by one base Act have thrown my self headlong from all those glorious Hopes whereunto thou hadst raised me. And now, O God, what can I say in my own behalf, my Sin being so great, my Folly so utterly inexcusable! O I am ashamed, I am ashamed of my self, I lament and abhor the Madness and Wickedness of my own Choice; and O that it were in my power to recal it! But woe is me it is past into an Act, and by that Act my Innocence is already stained, my Soul forfeited, and it is no more in my Power to undo what I have done, than to recal the Hours of Yesterday. What then shall I do, or whither shall I turn my self! 'Tis against thee, O Lord, against thee I have sinned, and now I have none but thee to flee to. I have nothing of my own to plead in my own behalf, my Conscience condemns me, and my Sin, my Sin, cries aloud against me; so that unless thou wilt be pleased to listen to the interceding*

* Here name the sinful Act you have committed.

Bloud

Bloud of thy Son; and to conſult thine own Bowels and Compaſſions, and from thence to fetch Arguments of Mercy. I am undone for ever by my own Folly. Wherefore for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, for thy own Goodneſs and Mercies ſake, have pity, have pity upon me; heal my Soul, for I have ſinned againſt thee; be merciful to my Sin, for it is great. Thou haſt promiſed to receive returning Sinners, to blot out their Iniquities, and to heal their Back-ſlidings. I deſire, O Lord, to return unto thee, I hate & renounce my Sin, and do here abhor my ſelf in Duſt and Aſhes before thee. Wherefore for thy Pity ſake, O try me this once more, & do not preſently caſt me away from thy Preſence, nor take thy Holy Spirit from me, but reſtrain me by his Grace from all preſumptuous Sins, and ſuffer them not to have Dominion over me. And quicken me, O Lord, for thy Name's ſake, that for the future I may watch more carefully, reſiſt more vigorouſly, and walk more circumſpectly than I have hitherto done: and that from henceforth I may be intirely devoted to thee, and ſerve thee without Interruption, do thou ſo confirm me by thy Grace in my holy Reſolution, as that I may chuſe rather to die than to offend thee any more. And now, O Lord, though by my Rebellion againſt thee this Day, I have rendred my ſelf moſt unworthy of thy fatherly Care and Protection, yet I beſeech thee to watch over me this Night for good, and give me a ſafe Repoſe in the Arms of thy Providence, that I may have yet a farther Space to repent of mine Iniquity. And grant, I beſeech thee, that when I awake in the Morning, I may be warned by the woful remembrance of this Day's fall, to take more Care of my Steps, and to ſhun or refuſe thoſe Snares and Temptations that

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lie all around me. All which I do most humbly and earnestly beg of thee, even for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

Directions for the Exercise of our private Religion *in the state of our* Progress *and* Improvement *in the* Christian Life, *with* Forms *of* private Devotion *fitted for this State.*

When you enter into your Closet in the *Morning*, indeavour to affect your self with Gratitude and Thankfulness to God for his Grace, by representing to your self the Danger and Misery of that sinful State out of which you are recovered, and the great Incapacity you were in to recover without his Assistance; and then make this *thankful Acknowledgment* to him.

O Most gracious and most merciful Father, thou art a liberal Benefactor to thy Creation, a never-failing Friend to Mankind, and a most tender Lover of Souls, for whose everlasting Welfare thou hast been always consulting, and hast left no method of Love unattempted, to rescue them from Sin and Misery. O blessed, for ever blessed, be thy great Name for the Experience I have had of this thy fatherly Goodness. I am a Monument of thy Goodness, a living Instance and Wonder of thy Mercy; for me hast thou quickned who was dead in Trespasses and Sins, and who had long ago perished in mine Iniquities,

hadſt thou not been infinitely patient & long ſuffering. I had forfeited my Soul to thee, and thou mighteſt juſtly have cut me off, and given me my Portion with Hypocrites, and, conſidering how I provoked thee to it by my daily Rebellions. I cannot but admire thy Forbearance towards me. But that thou ſhouldeſt not only forbear me, but follow me with thy Kindneſs, & never ceaſe importuning me to return to my Duty and Happineſs till thou hadſt conquered me by thy gracious Perſuaſions, O incomparable Love! O amazing Goodneſs! never to be ſufficiently admired and adored! Wherefore praiſed, for ever praiſed, be thy Grace, which hath redeemed my Life from eternal Death, and my Soul from the nethermoſt Hell; which hath reſcued me from the Snare of the Devil, and the pernicious Bondage of my Luſts, and implanted in my Nature theſe heavenly Graces and Diſpoſitions, and hitherto improved and advanced them towards my eternal Happineſs. This, O my God, all this, I owe to thy free and undeſerved Goodneſs, that I that was dead am now alive, that I that was loſt am found, that I that was a ſlave to my Luſts am made free from Sin, and tranſlated into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, is purely the Effect of thy free Grace, & to be intirely aſcribed to thy all-powerful Goodneſs. Go on, O Lord, go on, I beſeech thee, and perfect thine own Work, that ſo the Glory of it may be for ever redounding to thee; and that as I have been hitherto a ſignal Inſtance of thy Goodeſs, ſo I may be an happy Inſtrument of thy Praiſe to eternal Ages. And grant, I beſeech thee, that the ſenſe of thy unſpeakable Kindneſs towards me, may ſo captivate my Soul and all my Faculties, as that I may be moſt intirely thine;

as that my Reason and Will, my Fear and Hope, and Love and Desire may from henceforth be all resigned up to thee, and for ever devoted to the Honour and Worship of thy infinite Glories and Perfections; and this I most humbly beg for Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with thy self, and thy Eternal Spirit, be rendred all Honour, Glory and Power from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

After this Thanksgiving, consider briefly with your self the indispensible Necessity of your Perseverance to the End, and how not only vain and fruitless, but also hurtful and mischievous to you, all your past Labour in Religion will be without it; and then conclude your Morning Devotion with this *Prayer for Perseverance.*

O *God, who art unchangeably holy and blessed, who art the same Yesterday, to day, and for ever, and dost never swerve or vary from the essential Goodness and Purity of thine own Nature, look down I beseech thee upon me, a fickle, weak and mutable Creature, whom thou hast redeemed to thy self, and hitherto conducted by thy Grace and Spirit. Thou knowest, O Lord, the Weakness of my Nature, and how unable I am, without thy Strength and Assistance, to finish the Race which thou hast set before me; thou knowest what Temptations I must struggle with, and what Difficulties I must yet overcome, before I am seized of the blessed Prize I am contending for: wherefore, since thou hast hitherto been my constant Support and Defence, forsake me not now for thy Names sake, but as thou hast begun a good work*

in me, so I beseech thee to finish and compleat it; to uphold my feeble Soul by thy free Spirit under all Temptations and Difficulties, that so by patient continuance in well-doing, I may seek for, and at last obtain honour and glory, immortality and eternal life. For which end, O Lord, preserve me from being over-confident of my own Abilities, and inspire me with a holy Jealousie of my self, that whilest I stand I may take heed lest I fall. And if at any time I should be so base, and so unhappy, as to offend thee wilfully (which I beseech thee to prevent for thy Mercy and Compassion sake) O suffer me not to sleep in my Sin, but recall me instantly by the Checks of my Conscience, and the Convictions of thy Spirit, lest while I add Sin to Sin, and one degree of Wickedness to another, my Lusts should regain their Dominion over me, and thou shouldest be angry with me, and reject me from thy Covenant for ever. And that I may every Day serve thee more freely and stedfastly, wean me, I beseech thee, more and more from those Temptations to Sin that are round about me, and give me such a true understanding of the nature of all the Goods and Evils of this World, as that neither the Flatteries of the one, nor the Terrors of the other, may ever be able to withdraw me from my Duty. And lest while I am mortifying my old Sins, I should carelesly permit new ones to spring up in my Nature; good God, do thou mind me to search and try my own Heart, and take a severe account even of the smallest Defects and Imperfections within me; that so I may correct and reform them in time, before they are improved into inveterate Habits. And grant that I may be always so sensible of my own Imperfection, as that I may never rest in any present Attainment, but may still be pressing forward to the mark of my high calling in Jesus Christ.

Christ. Suggest to me, I beseech thee, frequent thoughts of my Mortality, that so while I have Time and Opportunity, I may be preparing for my Departure hence, and making provision for a dying hour. In order whereunto, assist me, O Lord, I beseech thee, strictly to examine and renew my past sinful Courses, that so if there be any remains of Guilt abiding upon my Conscience, I may purge them away by proper Acts of repentance, before I go hence and be no more seen! And grant that as I have formerly abounded in Sin, so I may now redeem that precious Time I have lost, by abounding in the contrary Vertues, that so, as far as in me lies, I may revoke and undo the multitude of my past Sins, by doing all the Good I am able for the future. And that I may hold out and persevere to the end, preserve and continue me in the Communion of thy Church, and suffer me not to be led away by the errors of the wicked, and to fall from my own stedfastness. And finally, I beseech thee to grant that in the use of these blessed Means, I may so far prevail over the Infirmities and Corruptions of my Nature, as that at last I may have a clear and certain Feeling of my own Integrity and Uprightness towards thee; that so being from thence assured of thy Love and of my Title to eternal Happiness, I may run the ways of thy Commandments more chearfully, and at last finish my Course with unspeakable Joy. And now, O Lord, I resign my self to thee, take me, I beseech thee, into thy care and protection this Day, preserve me from all Evil, but especially from Sin, and quicken me by thy Spirit unto every good work, that so I may serve thee with a free and chearful Mind, and make it my meat and drink to do thy blessed will. All which I humbly beg for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and Mediation I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

In the *Evening*, when you enter into your Cloſet, conſider what is the preſent Frame and Temper of your Mind; and upon Enquiry you will perceive, either that through the preſent *Prevalency* of your *corrupt Nature*, you are *averſe* to divine Offices, or that through *bodily Infirmity*, you are *indiſpoſed* to them, or that through *Worldly-mindedneſs* and *Vanity of Spirit*, you are *cold* and apt to be *diſtracted* in them, or laſtly, that your *Heart* is very much *enlarged*, and your *Mind* and *Affections* vigorouſly *diſpoſed* towards divine and heavenly things.

If upon Enquiry you find that through the preſent *Prevalency* of your *corrupt Nature* you are *averſe* to divine Offices, endeavour to affect your ſelf with Shame and Sorrow for it, by repreſenting to your Mind the great Impiety and Baſeneſs, the monſtrous Folly and Ingratitude of this your preſent Temper, and then offer up this following *Prayer*.

O *My moſt gracious God, and moſt kind and merciful Father, thou art the beſt Friend I have in all the World, and haſt ſhewn a thouſand times more Love to me than ever I ſhewed to my ſelf; but after all the vaſt and moſt indearing Obligations thou haſt laid upon me, this vile and ungrateful Heart of mine ſtill retains ſome Dregs of its ancient Enmity againſt thee. Had I but the common Senſe and Ingenuity of a Man in me, how could I think of thee without Raptures of Love; how could I draw near unto thee without Tranſports of Delight and Complacency! But, vile and ungrateful that I am, I can think of all thy Goodneſs*

ness with cold and frozen Affections, and can come into thy Presence, not only with Indifference but Reluctancy. Good God, what am I made of! what an insensible Soul do I carry about me! O I am ashamed of my self, I am confounded with the sense of my own Baseness; and yet, woe is me, I cannot help it. I strive to shake off this Clog of my corrupt Nature, but still it hangs upon me, and sinks and weighs down my Soul as oft as 'tis aspiring towards thee. O my God, have pity upon me, deliver me from this Body of Sin, ease my weary and heavy laden Soul of this grievous Burthen under which it labours and groans, and suffer not this spark of divine Life which thou hast kindled in me to be oppress and extinguisht by it; but so cherish it, I beseech thee, with the continual Influences of thy Grace, as that at length it may break through all this Rubbish that suppresses it, and finally rise into a glorious Flame. Then shall I always approach thee with Joy, and breath up my Soul to thee in every Prayer; then shall my heart be firmly united to thee in a devout and chearful Affection, and my Prayers shall come up as Incense before thee, and breath a sweet smelling savour into thy Nostrils. Hear me therefore, O my God, I beseech thee, and strengthen me with all might in the inward man, that for the future I may contend more vigorously and successfully against these vile Inclinations of my Nature which do so miserably hamper and depress my Soul, that so at last I may be a Conqueror, and more than a Conqueror, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

If through any *bodily Infirmity*, such as *Melancholy*, *Weariness*, *Drowsiness*, or *Sickness*, you find your self *indisposed* to divine Offices, indeavour to

quicken your sluggish Mind with the Consideration of some one of the most moving Arguments of your Religion, such as the Love of God and of your Saviour, the Majesty of God's Presence in which you are, or the blessed Immortality you hope for; and then address your self to God in this following *Prayer.*

O Blessed God, thou art a most pure and active Spirit, who dost always move with an uncontroulable Freedom, and art never hindred or wearied in thy Operations; have pity upon me, I beseech thee, thy poor infirm Creature, who am cumbred with this Body of death, and so depress't by its manifold Frailties, that I cannot lift up my Heart unto thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, my Spirit is willing though my Flesh is weak; my labouring Soul aspires towards thee, it stretches forth the Wings of its Desires towards thee, and would fain mount up above all earthly things, and unite it self with thee in eternal Love; but alas! its Fervours are dampt, and its Endeavours tired by this clog of Flesh that hangs upon it, and perpetually sinks and weighs it down again. O my God, draw near unto me, and touch my Mind with such a powerful sense of thee, as in despite of these my bodily Indispositions may attract and draw up my Soul unto thee. And if it be thy blessed will, release me from these fleshly Incumbrances, and fit my Body to my Mind, that I may serve thee, as I desire to do with a fervent and a chearful Spirit. But if it shall seem good in thine Eyes to leave me struggling under these bodily oppressions, Lord give me Patience and Submission to thy heavenly Will; that so when I cannot approach thee with that Pleasure and Satisfaction I desire, I may be heartily content to serve thee

upon

upon any Terms, and that what I want of Vigour and Chearfulness in my Religion, I may make up in Truth and in Reality. And O let the Sense of these my present Indispositions cause me more vehemently to long after that free and blessed State, wherein, with fixt and steady Thoughts, with flagrant Love and an entire Devotion of Soul, I shall for ever worship, praise, and glorifie thy Name. Amen.

If through present *Worldly-mindedness* or *Vanity of Spirit*, you find your self *cold* and apt to be *distracted* in your Religious Offices, indeavour to stir up your Affections, by representing to your self the Greatness and urgency of your spiritual Wants, the Vanity of all outward things, and the Reality and Fulness of Heavenly Enjoyments And do what you can to recollect your wandring Thoughts, by setting your self in the Presence of the Great God, to whose All-seeing Eye every Thought and Motion of your Soul is open and naked. And when by thus doing, you have composed your mind into a more serious Frame, present this following *Prayer.*

O *Thou ever Blessed Majesty, who fillest Heaven and earth with thy Presence, and art always listening to the Supplications of a world of Creatures that hang upon thee, open, I beseech thee, thine Ears of Mercy to me, who am unfit and unworthy to approach thee; who, by setting my Affections upon things below, and plunging my self into the Cares and Pleasures of this Life, have estranged and alienated my Mind from thee, and lost that delightful Relish of thee, with which I was wont to draw near unto thee. And now that I*

am retired from the World to converse with thee, and spread my wants and my desires before thee, those worldly Cares and Delights, with which I have been too too conversant, are importunately thrusting themselves upon me, to divert my Thoughts, distract my Intentions, and carry away my Affections from thee; by reason whereof my Mind wanders, my Hope droops, and my Desires are frozen, and whilst I am drawing near thee with my Lips, my Heart is running away from thee. O my God, have pity upon me, pluck my Soul out of this deep Mire, quicken, raise, and spiritualize these my groveling Affections. Possess this Heart, which opens it self to thy gracious Influences, with such a strong and vigorous Love to thee, as may lift me up above all earthly things, and continually carry forth my Soul in vehement desires after thee! that so I may always approach thee with a joyful heart, being glad to leave the company of all other things to go to thee, my God, my exceeding Joy. Give me a sober, diligent, and collected Spirit, that is neither choaked with Cares, nor scattered with Levity, nor discomposed with Passion, nor estranged from thee with sinful prejudice or inadvertency; but fix it fast to thy self with the indissoluble Bands of an active Love, and pregnant Devotion; that so, whenever I prostrate my self before thee, I may presently be born away far above all these sensible Goods in a high Admiration of thee, and a passionate Longing after thee. And now, O Lord, while I am addressing to thee, gather in, I beseech thee, my wandring Thoughts, and fix and stay them upon thy self. And, O do thou touch my cold and earthly Desires with an out-stretched Ray from thy self, and cause them to rise and flame up to thee in Fervours answerable to my pressing Wants, that I may so ask as that I may receive, so seek as that I may find,

so

ſo knock as that it may be opened unto me, through Jeſus Chriſt my bleſſed Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

If after this you find your *Heart* is very much *enlarged*, and your *Mind* and *Affections* vigorouſly *diſpoſed* towards God and Heavenly things, fix your Mind a little while upon the Beauty and Excellency of his Nature, or upon ſome of the moſt affecting Inſtances of his Love, or upon the bleſſed State above, and then go on with this following *Prayer.*

O Thou moſt excellent Being, thou infinitely amiable and adorable Majeſty, thou pattern of Beauty and Standard of Goodneſs, who art glorious beyond all praiſe, and doſt out-reach all Wonder, and comprehend all Perfection; bleſſed be thy Name, thou haſt touched my Soul with a lively ſenſe of thy Glory; I feel it ſhining through me, and like an active flame inſinuating into my heart; it fires my Love, cheriſhes my Hope, wings my Devotion, and diffuſes a vital warmth over all my Faculties; it raiſes me up into a Heavenly State, and fills me with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory: it captivates every thought in Obedience to thy Will, and brings every power of my ſoul into ſubjection to thee. Bleſſed be thy Name, thou haſt conquered me by thy Love, and I reſign my ſelf to thee with a chearful heart. I am intirely thine, I am thy Servant, truly I am thy Servant, and in this Title I glory more than in all the Honours of the World. But though I am highly advanced and exalted by ſerving thee, yet thou art ſo infinitely happy in the boundleſs perfections of thy own Nature, that thou canſt reap no other advantage from it but only the pleaſure of ſeeing thy poor creature

Creature blessed and made happy by it. What then shall I render unto thee, O thou Joy of my life, thou Treasure of my Love, thou supreme Felicity of my Nature! Alas, I have nothing but my self to give thee, nothing but this poor heart, that burns with Love to thee, that pants and breaths after thee, and desires above all things in the World, to be eternally united to thee in perfect Love. If I had ten thousand Hearts to love thee, ten thousand Tongues to praise thee, I would devote them all to thee, as freely and chearfully as I do my self. For whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. O God, thou art my God, and my Portion for ever. In thee I am blest, and in the Light of thy Countenance I rejoice more than in all the Joys and Pleasures of the World. I am ravish'd with thy Beauty, I admire thy Love, and from the bottom of my Soul adore thy Wisdom and Goodness. My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready, I will sing and give praise. Awake up my Glory, awake all the Powers of my Soul, I my self will awake and celebrate thy praises. Praised be the God of Glory, praised be the God of Love, praised be the Father of Mercies, praised be the best Friend of Souls, for thy Goodness reaches to the Heavens, thy Glory shines throughout the Creation, and thy Mercy is spread over all thy Works. Who can comprehend thine infinite Beauties, who can rehearse thy noble acts! who can shew forth all thy praise! I do confess my Thoughts are infinitely too short, my Affections too narrow, my expressions too scanty, to comprehend and sufficiently admire and celebrate thy Glory. But, O my God, thou knowest that I love thee, and, blessed be thy Name, I feel infinite reason so to do. O that I could love thee more, that I could love thee but as much as Angels and glorified Spirits do, who yet

cannot

cannot love thee as much as thou deservest, because thou deservest to be beloved infinitely. But my Soul thirsts for thee, and longs after thee. O when shall I be admitted into thy blessed presence, there to see, and admire, and Love and adore thee for ever! When shall I shake off this Clog of sinful Mortality, that sinks and depresses me, and flee to those happy Regions of perfect Love, where I shall continually feed upon thee with inexpressible Delight, and be filled with a strong and everlasting Sense of thy Goodness. O thou that art the beginner and finisher of every good work, be pleased to assist my holy Endeavours, to withdraw my Mind more and more from these sensible things, that it may have a clearer sight of its heavenly Country from whence it came, and whither it desires to return; that so, having my Eye always fixt on that blessed recompence of reward, I may live above this World, and, in despite of all its Terrors and Allurements, persevere to the end in a steady and even Course of Obedience. And now, O Lord, since thou hast been graciously pleased to inspire my Mind with these delightful Thoughts of thee, and, to enlarge my Heart with such sweet Transports of Love to thee; grant, I beseech thee, that they may not only please, but better me; that they may lift me up above all the Temptations of this World, and revive my Strength, and quicken my Endeavours, and compose my distrustful Heart into a stedfast Dependance upon thee, that so I may be fruitful in all good works, and my Heart may be establish'd unblameable in holiness before thee, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus. Amen, Amen.

After

After you have uſed one or more of the foregoing Prayers, according as they ſuit with the preſent Temper of your Mind, take a ſhort view of your Defects and Imperfections, and eſpecially of thoſe that cleave moſt to your Nature; and briefly repreſent to your Minds the intrinſic Evil and Vileneſs of them, and how they clog your Religion, blemiſh your Nature, and obſtruct your Happineſs, and then conclude with the following *Prayer, for growth in grace.*

O *God, who art the moſt excellent Nature, the Perfection of all Beauty, and the Fountain of all Graces, who doſt infallibly underſtand what is beſt to be choſen, and invariably chuſe by the beſt and pureſt Reaſon; look down, I beſeech thee, upon me thy poor defective Creature, who am aſhamed of my ſelf to ſee how unlike thee I am; how I am laden with Imperfections, and how after all my religious Endeavours, my Nature is ſtill vitiated with unreaſonable Luſts and Affections; how much Vanity and Impertinence there yet remains in my Mind, how much perverſeneſs in my Will, how much ſpiritual and carnal Iniquity in my Affections and Appetites. Lord, I have been long a contending with this corrupt Nature, and yet upon all Occaſions I find my ſelf too too prone to be*. Woe is me, even my faireſt Graces have their Spots and Blemiſhes, my pureſt Diſpoſitions their ſinful intermixtures, and my beſt works their Flaws and Imperfections. O my God, have pity on me, who here lie ſighing at thy Feet, under a miſerable*

* Here name the particular Infirmities that ſtick cloſeſt to your Nature.

ſerable diſeaſed Nature; and as thou haſt begun the bleſſed Cure in me, ſo, for Chriſt his ſake, I beſeech thee to compleat it; that, being intirely recovered, and raiſed up unto newneſs of Life, I may, in the perfect Health and Vigour of my Soul, ſerve and glorifie thee for ever. For which end, I beſeech thee, confirm me more and more in the Belief of thoſe immortal Pleaſures beyond the Grave, which thou haſt treaſur'd up for thoſe that love and obey thee; that by the ſtrength of a lively Faith, and vigorous Hope, my Soul may be rais'd above this World, and learn to deſpiſe and trample upon all its gilded Vanities, whenſoever they preſent themſelves either to allure or to terrifie me from purſuing the heavenly Enjoyments. Excite in me ſuch a vehement Thirſt after thoſe Rivers of Pleaſures above, as may every day render me more cool and indifferent towards earthly things, more contented and ſatisfied under all the events and iſſues of thy Providence, and more active and vigorous in my heavenly Calling. And I beſeech thee to inſpire me with ſuch clear and lively Apprehenſions of thy eſſential Beauties and Perfections, and of thy bountiful Love and boundleſs Benevolence to all thy Creatures, as may every day more and more raiſe and improve my love to thee; that this being the great Spring and Principle of all my Actions, may continually excite me to a chearful Obedience to thy Will, and a vigorous Imitation of thy Perfections. O cauſe me to love thee for thy ſelf, and Religion for thee, and the Inſtruments of Religion, in order to thy Glory and my own Happineſs; that ſo founding my Content upon thee, and the bleſſed Intereſts of a vertuous Life, I may grow in Grace, and be rich in good Works, and go on with a ſatisfied and triumphant

Spirit

Spirit from Imperfection to Strength, from Acts to Habits, and from Habits to Confirmation in Grace; and may be still more and more confirmed in all the heavenly Graces, till they are finally consummated into everlasting Glory. And when, by thy Grace and Assistance, I have perfectly conquered the corrupt Nature within, and the Temptations without me, and am arrived into the State of everlasting Triumph, I will lay all my Victories at thy Feet, and, with Palms in my hand, and Hallelujahs on my Lips, celebrate thy praises to Eternity. Hear me, O my God, in this and whatever else thou knowest to be needful for me, even for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and Words I further pray, Our Father, &c.

FINIS.